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JOHN BULL

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EDITORIAL

Save the theatre

MR. PETER SAUNDERS, a theatrical manager, is angry. He has had to take off two plays which he had presented in London's West End. They looked like successes. But Mr. Saunders was beaten, he says, by the entertainment tax.

One play, *The Manor of Northstead*, ran at the Duchess Theatre for nine months and took about £56,000. But by the time Mr. Saunders had paid £8,451 in entertainment tax, he was about £1,000 out of pocket.

"If a play does well, the government takes entertainment tax," he says. "If it loses money, the government still takes entertainment tax. It is infamous to be taxed on a loss."

PLENTY of other managers can provide similar examples. Mr. Jack de Leon put on *Red Letter Day* at London's Garrick Theatre, where it ran for twenty weeks. It took £28,000—just about enough to keep it running if he had not had to pay £4,920 in tax. As it was, he lost £4,440.

MR. PETER SAUNDERS
Beaten by a tax

Theatre people are now campaigning to persuade the Chancellor of the Exchequer, before he settles his Budget, that the theatre is in danger of being killed by a tax that yields a comparatively trifling sum.

The total revenue of about £40 millions a year from entertainment tax comes chiefly from the cinemas, which got a tax cut of £3½ millions last year. Tax levied on theatres and music halls produces only £2,400,000.

Yet that is the margin between life and death, according to the newly formed Theatre Entertainment Tax Committee. Because of that burden, says its chairman, Mr. Dingle Foot, "famous playhouses, local repertories, and music halls are putting up their shutters or being used for different purposes. Dozens of others are struggling on against repeated losses."

Equity, the trade union for nine thousand British actors, reckons that only two out of five can earn a fair living. One in three earns practically nothing at all.

BUT not only actors will suffer if the theatre dies. The theatre is the essential training school for all the talent that gives us our films, radio and television.

It can be argued that, if stars took smaller salaries, plays could succeed in spite of the tax. But the theatre, to satisfy the public, must have those stars, who are offered so much more money elsewhere.

The present Chancellor, Mr. Butler, removed the entertainment tax which was killing county cricket. He regarded cricket as part of the British way of life.

So is the live theatre. A little Budgetary mercy, costing only £2,400,000 a year, would save it.

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Family chauffeur

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MARCH 26 1955 VOL. 97 NO. 2543 PHONE: TEMPLE BAR 2468 GRAMS: HEROICALLY, WESTCENT, LONDON

FREE SPEECH

Prescription for an ideal holiday

WHEN my doctor gave me a lift in his car the other evening, we started discussing holidays. He asked me what I was planning for this summer.

"I'm going to lie on a Spanish beach," I said decidedly, "with a bottle of wine buried in the sand within arm's reach."

My doctor adopted his consulting room manner. "It sounds very pleasant," he said. "But as your medical adviser I don't recommend it.

"You're a surveyor, and I know you spend most of your time alone in the open air. Your holiday should be a complete change from normal routine. So, ideally, you should choose a crowded resort and spend a fortnight in the funfairs, amusement arcades and music halls.

"If you were a business man with a large staff and a desk like a tennis court, that Spanish beach would be grand; if you were a housewife, you should be waited on hand and foot."

"Do you practise what you preach?" I asked my doctor. "If I did," he said sheepishly, "I'd be spending my leisure time with all those fit youngsters at the dance hall down the road—not offering you medical advice."—T. CLEAVER, Stafford.

Outlook: Settled

READING about the hardships of animals during the winter storms in Scotland, I got some comfort by recalling the huge cattle shelters I saw at Fort William last summer. They must have given shelter to many lucky calves during the blizzards.

In the rugged Highland countryside, it was surprising to see these huge yellow buildings marked "Great

"Cow-punchers" bring the cattle home

Glen Cattle Ranch." They looked like sets for a western film.—J. SAYERS, Norwich.

Great Glen Cattle Ranch is the property of Mr. J. W. Hobbs, who learned farming in British Columbia. He has been responsible for intensive development of Highland cattle-raising, and has built three cattle shelters for the winter comfort of his stock.

Late For Work

I HAVE had difficulties similar to those of the reader who spent a couple of years seeing the world, and then couldn't find a job ("Free Speech," March 5).

When my education and national service were over, I was still uncertain what career to follow, so I tried various jobs for a few months at a time. At twenty-two I had tried ten different trades before I decided just what I wanted to do.

But then my troubles began. When prospective employers saw my record of jobs, they invariably decided I was just looking for a few more months' work, or they told me I was too old to be trained.

It seems that my youthful indecision has condemned me to a life of drifting. — L. A. D., Acton, London.

Desperate Diet

JUST before the recent snowstorms here I had a small greenhouse reglazed. After a week or so of the really bad weather I was surprised to find starlings busy feeding on the still-soft putty.

Now that the thaw has come, the damage has been laid bare. Every scrap of putty has been pecked off the window frames. — W. MURRAY, Thurso Castle Gardens, Thurso, Caithness.

"The light colour of new putty probably attracted the starlings," says the curator of birds at the London Zoo. "They would enjoy the taste of linseed oil, and as long as the putty did not contain white lead it should be harmless."

NEXT WEEK IN JOHN BULL

THE RED HOT ROBBER

A light-hearted new story by BRETON AMIS

Not Beyond Recall

THE Sunday morning service at an R.A.F. station where I was padre was nearly over, and the sidesmen had just brought me the collection to be presented at the altar.

Suddenly, I caught a glint of red out of the corner of my eye. There was a tug on my surplice sleeve, and to my horror I found my seven-year-old daughter, conspicuous in her red velvet coat and hat, standing by my side. Anxiety was written all over her face.

In the tense silence of the church came a clear and frantic whisper: "Daddy, I've put *two* sixpences in, and one of them's my pocket money."

I gave her one back. What else could I do?—R. M., Germany.

Fenced In

I WOULD like to see barrier rails along the edges of more pavements in busy streets. Only at pedestrian crossings should there be gaps; that would stop accidents caused by people who step off the pavement without warning. — D. GOLDHAWK, Bath, Somerset.

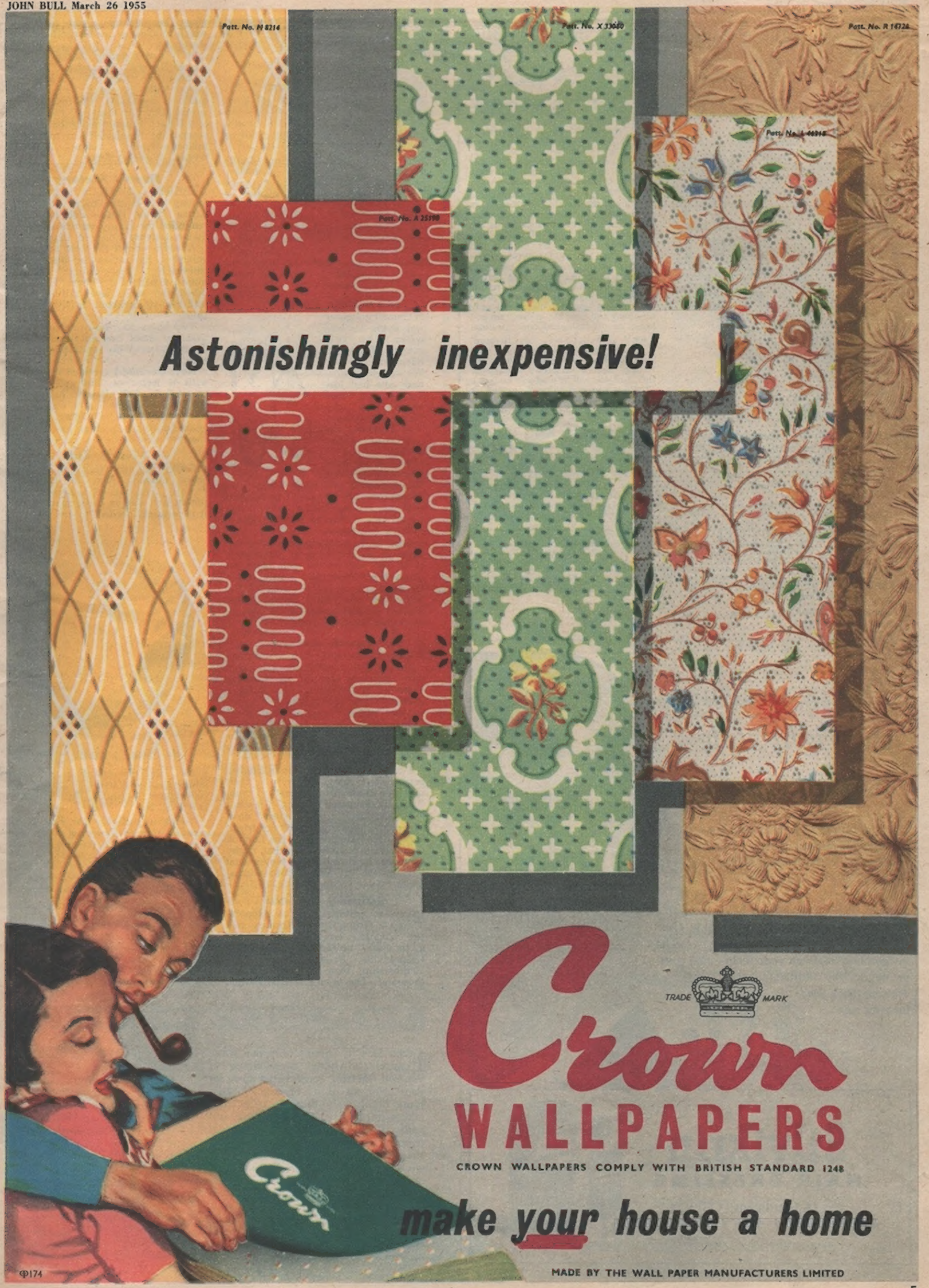
A conference of road safety organizations made a "priority recommendation" that more guard rails should be erected in busy streets. The Ministry of Transport has promised action on the proposal.

Speaks Volumes

THE books my young daughter uses at her primary school are modern, easily understood and well-illustrated.

Yet the textbooks my son brings home to do his grammar school homework are dirty, torn and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6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FREE SPEECH

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

sometimes up to thirty years old. It looks as if primary schools get more attention from the authorities than grammar schools, where, I should think, books are more important.—MRS. V. L., London, S.W.19.

Local education authorities decide how much shall be spent on books. In London, the annual allowance for school textbooks is 2s. 6d. for a nursery school pupil, 4s. for an infant, 7s. for a junior, 17s. 6d. for a secondary school child up to fifteen years of age, and 30s. for a senior pupil. The L.C.C. also maintains a large circulating library of books—from which the older grammar school volumes probably came.

Pole Call

MY small daughter was flying her kite when the tail caught in some telephone wires. We were both worried—she had lost her toy, and I had visions of a telephone breakdown—so I phoned the engineers for advice.

Within an hour a smart Post Office van appeared, and while I was wondering how the kite could be reached without a long ladder, the driver pulled out a bundle of rods like a sweep's equipment.

Soon he had a long pole fitted up. Then he soaked a rag in petrol, tied it to the end of the pole, and set it on fire. With this blazing torch he neatly burned the string of the kite and the rest floated down almost undamaged.—LESLIE DALE, St. Lukes Avenue, Ilford.

Touch Judge

I WAS taking an Italian friend on a sight-seeing tour of Malta the other day when we stopped to watch a game of rugby being played on a particularly muddy pitch.

The Italian watched in awed silence. Then in an astonished tone he said: "These people must be crazy. Do the Maltese often play this game?"

I told him the players were English Servicemen enjoying one of their national games. He understood then. "Ah, Englishmen," he said. "I see."

Nothing the "crazy English" do is surprising, apparently. But my friend is certainly a supporter of the London doctor who recently said that rugby is more barbaric than professional boxing.—R. H. WILKINSON, Sliema, Malta.

Gaining Ground

IN your editorial, "The Hopeful Things" (JOHN BULL, February 26), the Salvation Army is said to have a thousand uniformed members in Leopoldville, Belgian Congo. The membership there is actually six thousand. The town's central branch alone has nearly 2,500 members, which makes it the largest in the world.

It is worth noting that a Belgian named Henri L. Becquet and his wife began the Army's work in Leopoldville in 1934. From that humble beginning the work has spread through most of the Congo and French Equatorial Africa. Now it reaches to Stanleyville—1,100 miles inland.—G. F. CHURCH, Daleham Avenue, Egham, Surrey.

Desert Victory

ALBERTO DENTI'S adventures among the desert tribes in North Africa (JOHN BULL, February 19), reminded me of my service with the Sudan Defence Force in 1943.

A *nafir*—one of the local soldiers—gained a reputation for discovering thieves by "sand-reading." When I missed a pair of my shoes, I remembered the *nafir*, and half-heartedly told him to set about discovering the thief.

Two hours later he came to tell me that my shoes had *not* been stolen. That shattered his reputation in my eyes.

Next morning I received my shoes, with a letter of apology, from a sergeant in Tobruk. He had taken them by mistake when he was posted to another unit.—ROBERT NORTH, Dunkeld Road, Wythenshawe, Manchester.

Visual Aid

I SAW this attractive and striking zebra crossing sign in Hamburg recently. As far as I know, it is pretty well unique in Germany. But it is certainly needed; on the morning

Hamburg's prancing zebra

I took the photograph I saw four minor road accidents—all caused by jay-walkers. — BRIAN W. CHERRY, B.A.O.R. 20.

"This is probably the first zebra crossing sign in Germany," says the German Diplomatic Mission in London. "It has been erected as an experiment. Usually pedestrians have only traffic lights and policemen to help them to cross the roads."

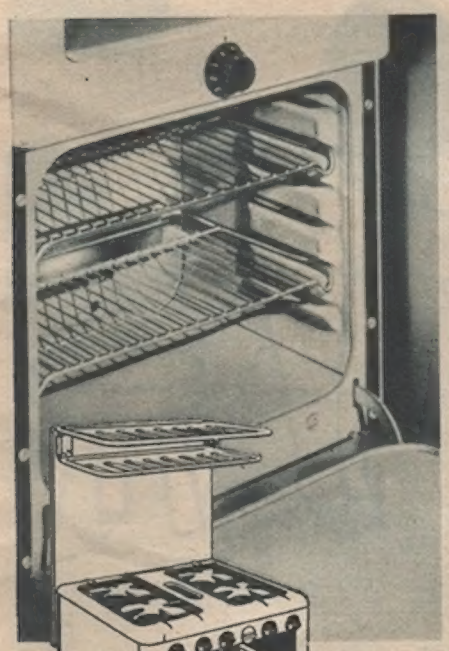
John Bull pays one guinea for each letter published in "Free Speech," and at the usual rates for photographs. Readers with problems (other than medical) should write to the John Bull Free Advice Service, whose experts answer questions by post

THIS WEEK'S COVER

LET'S face it, there's only one thing more satisfying than doing it yourself—getting someone to do it for you. Not all of it, of course. Just some deceptively difficult trifle that makes unpractised fingers fumble and adds all the more to your eventual triumph. Grease-blackened husbands, struggling beneath their cars, summon wives to pass down tools (in case their ordeal should go unnoticed). Dressmaking wives, like the one depicted by Fred Laurent, drag husbands from their papers. The most despairing thing about this do-it-yourself craze is that if you play the game and do it unaided, no one will believe you.

Good for cook and her cooking!

With this smart, cream enamel Century you dodge all the drudgery of cooking



Cleaning, for instance—round corners everywhere, and burners and hotplate that strip and reassemble in seconds. Result—more time for wonderful cooking with a wonderful cooker.

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2-3 ozs. Sugar
4-6 ozs. chopped Dates or Sultanas and Currants mixed
Approx. ¼ pint milk and water

Prepare a large saucepan of boiling water, grease a piece of greaseproof paper and have ready a pudding cloth and string. Sieve flour, salt and spices into a basin, add all the dry ingredients, mix well. Add the liquid and mix with a fork to a pliable dough. Turn on to a floured board and shape into a roll. Wrap in the greased paper, then in the pudding cloth, tying securely close to the cloth at both ends. Boil steadily for 2 hours. Turn out on to a hot dish.
N.B. The mixture may be put into a basin, covered with greased paper and steamed for 2 hours.

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"I gave Vykmin capsules to my daughter and they seemed to clear her chronic catarrh. Then I gave them to the factory staff and *not one working day was lost through colds last winter!*" writes Mrs. Harriman.

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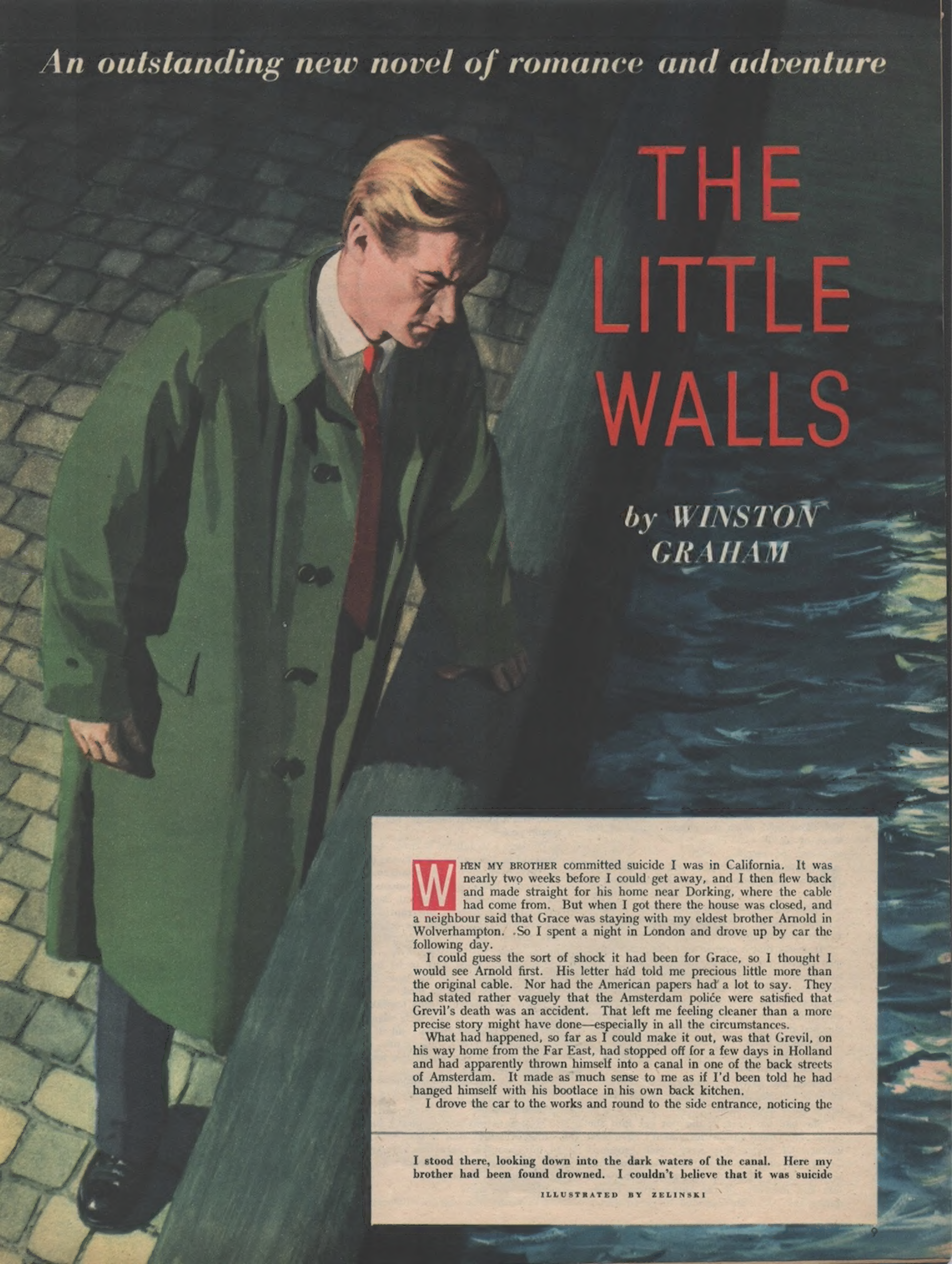


THE LITTLE WALLS

by WINSTON GRAHAM

WHEN MY BROTHER committed suicide I was in California. It was nearly two weeks before I could get away, and I then flew back and made straight for his home near Dorking, where the cable had come from. But when I got there the house was closed, and a neighbour said that Grace was staying with my eldest brother Arnold in Wolverhampton. So I spent a night in London and drove up by car the following day.

I could guess the sort of shock it had been for Grace, so I thought I would see Arnold first. His letter had told me precious little more than the original cable. Nor had the American papers had a lot to say. They had stated rather vaguely that the Amsterdam police were satisfied that Grevil's death was an accident. That left me feeling cleaner than a more precise story might have done—especially in all the circumstances.

What had happened, so far as I could make it out, was that Grevil, on his way home from the Far East, had stopped off for a few days in Holland and had apparently thrown himself into a canal in one of the back streets of Amsterdam. It made as much sense to me as if I'd been told he had hanged himself with his bootlace in his own back kitchen.

I drove the car to the works and round to the side entrance, noticing the

I stood there, looking down into the dark waters of the canal. Here my brother had been found drowned. I couldn't believe that it was suicide

ILLUSTRATED BY ZELINSKI

new building nearly completed in Green Street, and drew up under the old sign which said: "*Humphrey Turner & Sons, Engineers.*" It seemed more than ever a pity now that I'd never really known Humphrey Turner, who was my father.

In the main office there were two or three girls but no one was typing and I could hear Arnold's heavy voice from behind the frosted door.

Dictation stopped when a girl gave him my name, and after a moment or two I was shown in.

Arnold had always been the fleshy type but there had been a robustness about his weight. Now it looked flabby for the first time. I knew what *I* felt for Grevil, but I hadn't known what Arnold felt before. Perhaps he hadn't known himself until now. Or perhaps, I thought, as he began to tell me of it, he was upset because of the stigma that it left.

". . . a terrible thing. Still a young man, with so much of his achievement still before him. In spite of some slight waywardness of purpose, his whole record. . . . It's impossible to imagine how he must have felt, what he must have thought. . . ."

"I only saw the American papers."

"The English didn't leave any doubt. There wasn't really much doubt, you know, from what the Dutch police told me."

"You went over, then?"

Arnold nodded. "Yes . . . Grace went with me. We—flew him home. The funeral was on the ninth."

"How is she?"

"Better now."

"And Peggy?"

"Back at school. It's been a terrible time for us all." He looked at me a bit resentfully; in the family I had always been the young one who got out of things. "We should have been glad of your help then. Of course, there is still a lot to settle up."

"There's a lot to *explain*," I said, on my feet again because I couldn't sit calmly to discuss what had happened as if it were something which could be pigeon-holed already and put behind us.

After a silence Arnold said cautiously: "Of course, one can't evade the fact that a brilliant man, with the gifts that Grevil had. . . . Such people live at a higher pressure than the ordinary man. Father did. They all do."

They all do. An uncomfortable epitaph, and one that I still rejected. One that it seemed to me it was pretty important we should all reject.

I said: "Grevil was finely balanced, if you like. But he'd much the clearest mind of the three of us."

MY brother blew his nose and then lifted his head and peered over his handkerchief at me. It was the old unwinking stare. "Events appear to prove you wrong, Philip."

I stared back. "Why is accident ruled out? A false step in the dark——"

"It seems that a woman told the police she'd seen Grevil jump into the canal. Under questioning she qualified it a little, said he might have stumbled; but one could see what she thought. Then—of course then there was an unfortunate letter found on him. That was what clinched it."

"A suicide letter?"

"No. One from some woman. Telling him she was finished with him."

Arnold put away his handkerchief. I don't know if I looked as unbelieving as I felt. "Does Grace know about this?"

"She had to. But, it did not get into the press. The Dutch authorities couldn't have been kinder. Of course they very much esteemed Grevil—not only for his archaeological work but because of the friendship that grew up between him and members of the Dutch royal family during the war. He was due to go to dinner with Count Louis Joachim, the evening after he died."

I said slowly: "Well, I just can't swallow this part at all."

"I don't see how we can get away from it, Philip."

"He was happy enough with Grace, surely. Who is this other woman? Did she give evidence?"

"She hasn't been traced yet. It was only a Christian name on the letter. The notepaper was that of the hotel where Grevil was staying."

I thought it out. Is one more tolerant of one's own morals than other people's? Not tolerant. It wasn't tolerance I lacked here, but understanding.

ARNOLD said: "I think now you're here I'll run you home to lunch. Grace is staying with us, you know. Or you can run me, if that's easier. It's nearly twelve and I don't think I could settle to work after your visit."

We went downstairs and got into my car.

He said: "How long will you stay?"

"About a week. You look prosperous here."

"Fair. Supply and delivery dates are our greatest problem. One loses contracts. Only last week a Belgian firm. . . . Of course, the death—the sudden and unexpected death—of one of the family gives one to think rather seriously about the future of the business."

"Well, yes; but you're young yourself."

"Even though Grevil was not an active member of the firm—certainly not the head and founder the way Father was—it still has an unsettling effect. It would be nice to see a greater distance ahead."

I knew what he meant and he knew what I meant and so we said no more on the way home.

Lunch was difficult. Grace welcomed me, as she always had done, but you could see that my turning up now had only brought things back to her in their first rawness. We carefully said nothing about it at the table, and afterwards Arnold went back to the works and Mary made a lame excuse and left us together. Then we talked about California for a bit until I broke off in the middle of a sentence and said:

"Grace, I wish I'd been on hand—nearer home anyway—when all this happened. You know what I felt for Grevil, and the cable was pretty hard to believe when it came."

Grace's face had that over-clear emotionless look that I think comes sometimes to people when they've lived for a long time with a bad thing and have at last seen the worst of it.

"I knew how you'd feel. Arnold wanted to send you a guarded message, but I thought you would prefer. . . ."

We began to talk of it then. Grevil had left England in November, as I knew, and had been in Java ever since. By arrangement with the Dutch and Indonesian governments, he had gone out to make new diggings at Sangiran, where excavations had been interrupted by the war, and also at Trinil, where the original Java man was found. At the end of last month he'd flown back to Holland, where most of his archaeological finds were to be deposited with the Rijksmuseum. He had been in Amsterdam only two days when he died.

When she finished, I didn't speak, but picked up a snap of Grevil in a little silver frame. He just looked tall and ascetic, and all the qualities I remembered didn't show at all.

"Arnold told you about the letter from the woman?" she said.

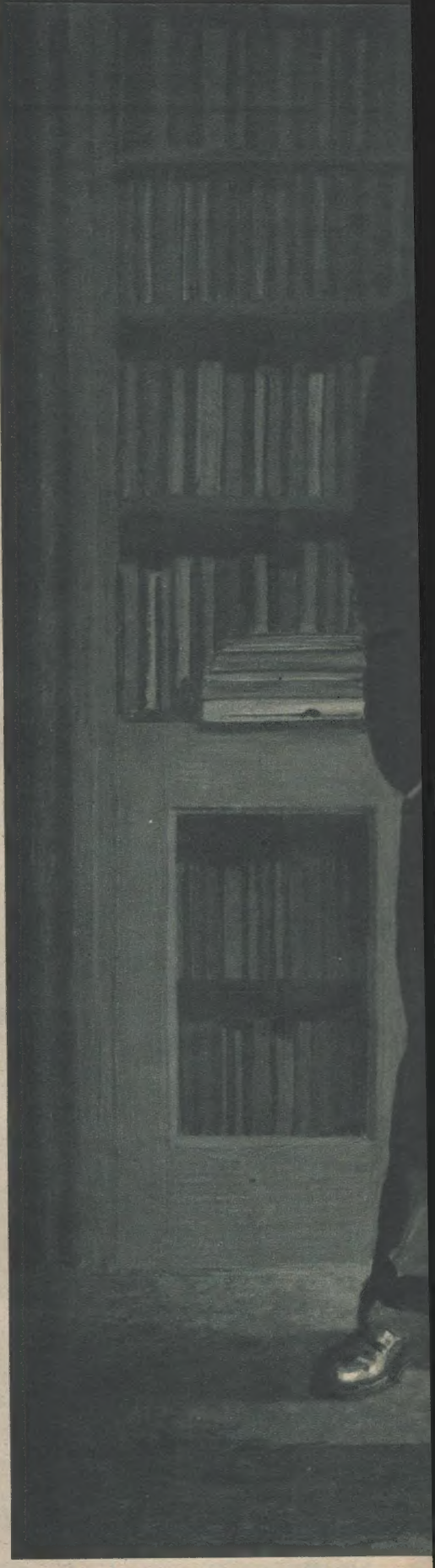
"Yes, he did say something. . . . I didn't altogether accept it."

"Didn't you?"

"Not as it was told to me. I haven't seen it—I don't know what it said—but some things fit into people's characters as you know them and some don't. That doesn't fit into Grevil's as I imagine I knew him."

"No." she said.

I went on: "So you see, if Grevil did commit suicide, I don't think he did it for that reason."



Coxon looked up at me. "I've read about you

"Why do you say, '*if* he did commit suicide'?"

"Well, are you convinced?"

She got up and took the snapshot out of my hand. "What else is there to think?"

"There might be a good deal more. . . . This woman. Do you know anything at all about her?"

"Not yet. Grevil's friends and callers at the hotel weren't much noticed and the police have very little to go on."

"What was the name she signed?"

"Leonie. I don't know if it's Dutch."

I said: "But if he'd only been in Amsterdam two days, how could he be in that deep with any woman?"

"He'd known her before—must have, from her letter. He'd been over to Holland two or three times recently—making arrangements for

brother's death. How can I help?" I said: "You can tell me all you know of Jack Buckingham"

this trip to Java, meeting various colleagues."

"I suppose she could have been on the plane."

"No. The passenger list was checked. All the women passengers were traced. There was a friend of his on the plane, called Buckingham, a man he met in Indonesia—but no woman."

"And what does Buckingham say?"

"They haven't found him yet, either. He'd left Holland before the police began to inquire."

I WENT to the window and looked out at the garden. Behind me, Grace said: "I expect you feel I'm being disloyal to him in believing in this—this woman at all."

"No."

"In any case, it doesn't make me see the suicide as an understandable thing," Grace said. "I'd rather he'd taken six women. . . . But it *happened,* didn't it? We can't make it disappear by refusing to believe it. However hard we try, there's no escape."

That night I sat in my bedroom for a long time with a packet of cigarettes. I'd kidded myself that when I actually got here and was able to hear all the facts and talk everything out with Arnold and Grace, then the pain inside me would ease up. So far not so.

My more sensible self told me it wasn't Arnold's or Grace's fault that they were apparently sitting back and accepting what I wasn't willing to accept. *I* hadn't identified the body. *I* hadn't read the evidence of the woman who said she saw Grevil jump into the canal. *I* hadn't seen the note from the other woman. In their shoes I should by now probably have felt the same.

But at present I just wasn't willing to go along with them. There'd always been a particular link between Grevil and me. The elder by ten years, he had done far more for me than the average father and done it in a more comradely way. Arnold, four years older still and a bit out of range—and already pretty well preoccupied with a business suddenly short of its founder—had never meant much to me at all. Grevil was the one.

And Grevil was brilliant. Intellectually he stood a head above his plodding, persevering elder brother and his rash, unreliable younger one. A first-flight scientific brain—switched from its first choice to archaeology nine years ago—had gone along with an unusually stable sense of values. He had gone about his own life certain in his own beliefs, but never making a show of them; and his worst enemy couldn't have called him a prig.

And now he was gone, soon after his fortieth birthday, drowned indecently in a muddy canal. . . . I might carry on a perfect vendetta of inquiries and kick up hell with the police, but it wouldn't put one stone back where it had been. All I could hope to do was some sort of justice to his memory and perhaps in the process recover some of my own peace of mind.

ONE by one, I picked over the newspapers Arnold had given me. They didn't help much. "British Archaeologist Found Drowned in Holland." "Woman's Testimony in British Scientist's Suicide." And one of the picture papers had of course got hold of his earlier career: "British Atomic Scientist Meets Mystery Death in Amsterdam."

The most detailed account was in the *Manchester Guardian*:

> Grevil Prior Turner, the English scientist, who was found drowned in an Amsterdam canal . . . medical opinion that the body had been in the water about three hours when recovered . . . shortly before midnight a woman from a house overlooking the canal saw a man fall into the water. . . . Police are understood to have found no evidence of violence. . . . Dr. Turner is believed to have brought back valuable archaeological material which is at present being studied in the Rijksmuseum. . . . Educated at Rugby and Christ Church . . . distinguished physicist while still in his twenties . . . turned later to ethnology and archaeology . . . his book last year on the dolichocephalic skull. . . .

I chucked the papers in a heap and turned to the letters Grace had given me. They were much the usual thing: comments on weather, conditions in the country, progress of his work. Only one thing was noticeable, that the man Jack Buckingham, whoever he might be, had been in the picture for at least a couple of months and that his name constantly recurred. Grevil mentioned him first as "a lone white man, a surprise to come across in Surabaya, particularly one of his calibre. I don't yet know what he's doing here and he looks a trifle down on his luck; but what a pleasant fellow to talk to! I rather hope to see more of him."

In the next letter, things had moved on. Dr. Pangkal, Grevil's Indonesian assistant, had fallen ill and Buckingham was helping in his place. More than this, they were preparing to move camp some thirty miles on Buckingham's suggestion, to a place called Urtini, where they were going to make excavations in a river bed.

All the later letters Grace had given me were dated from Urtini except the last. In one he wrote: "I don't know what I should have done in Pangkal's continued absence without Jack Buckingham. Did I say he had a good brain? Perhaps 'good' isn't the right word. He's very much 'anti' many of the things I care most about. All the same, even if one ignores the emergency of Djandowi, his help and companionship have been quite invaluable."

I searched in the earlier letters for some

previous reference to the emergency at Djandowi, but found none.

The last letter of all said: "It's a relief to be up in the mountains for a day or two after that snake-house heat. J.B. has come along, too. I hold him in increasing affection; and it's queer the sense of affinity there is—knowing each other so short a time and finding so much to share. I have persuaded him to come home with me, and have invited him to stay with us for a few weeks while he gets on his feet and looks around. Hope you don't mind. I'm sure he'll not be much trouble and I'm certain you'll instantly take to him. Most people seem to."

In the end I gave it up and got into bed. I wondered if Buckingham would in fact be able to help us at all when he was located. Were any efforts being made to trace him or had the police of two countries already put away the file of Dr. Grevil Turner, F.R.S., who had come to a nasty end while the balance of his mind was disturbed? I didn't know. I meant to find out.

On the Friday morning I sat down in the office of a Colonel Powell, who worked on the less fashionable side of Whitehall. Powell was a tall, grey-visaged man near sixty whose face looked as if it had suffered a good deal of wear and tear keeping the Empire together.

He said: "The case certainly hasn't been dropped. Mr. Turner. We're satisfied that it has been handled—and is being handled—very competently by the Dutch police. But naturally we shan't consider it settled until at least two people have been traced."

"Have you any leads on them up to now?"

"No. A Mr. Jack Buckingham certainly arrived on the K.L.M. plane with Dr. Turner and registered at a hotel. But he stayed only two nights and then moved on. No one of that name has since left the country. He may, of course, be living with friends in Holland and have omitted to register, but he has certainly not come forward in answer to the broadcast appeal. With the woman we have still less to go on. A Christian name—though an unusual one—nothing more."

"Have you a copy of the letter she wrote?"

"We have the letter itself if you'd like to see that."

A MINUTE later, with a queer feeling of putting my fingers on something unclean, I was staring at the message which had been found in Grevil's pocket. The envelope was plain and untorn, the notepaper bore the heading HOTEL GROTIUS. Both were wrinkled and faded, but the ink of the letter had run surprisingly little. It read:

> This is just to say that I am leaving today. This time everything must be over between us, please believe me, it's really and truly the end. I came along this afternoon meaning to face you, but at the last I've suddenly funked it. What *is* there to say except what has been said before—and except goodbye?
>
> My dear, it's been rather a bad mess from the beginning—my fault every bit as much as yours. My fault that there ever was a beginning. Oh, I know there have been times—I don't deny them—but they don't make up for what goes with it—at least they don't for me. Everything that's happened these last two days makes the same point over again.
>
> If you still feel any friendship for me, please don't follow me and please don't write.
>
> I'm very sorry.
>
> Leonie.

I handed the thing back. "The handwriting is pretty good," I said. "And so is her English."

"Like that of many Dutch people. But probably she's not Dutch."

"Have you reason to think that?"

"Well, the hotel receptionist has given us a rough description of a woman who called to see your brother on the afternoon before he died. Here it is: 'Spoke to me in French, then in English. About twenty-four or twenty-five, fair hair cut short, grey-green eyes with some brown in them, shoulder bag, English- or American-style coat. Slight build, about five feet six or seven.' It gives a little to go on but not a great deal. She may not even be the woman."

"Who is this other woman who says she saw him jump into the canal?"

COLONEL POWELL rubber a finger down his leathery cheek. "Hermina Maas? There seems no reason to doubt her testimony."

"Not unless she had something to hide."

"What could she have to hide? Your brother hadn't been robbed, and there were no marks of violence on the body except a cut hand and a bruise on the forehead, which could have come about in falling. The Dutch doctor said the bruise was not severe enough to have caused a loss of consciousness."

I said: "Why was the body three hours in the water if this woman saw him go in?"

"Apparently she saw it happen from her window and by the time she got into the street he had disappeared from view. She told the police and they began a search."

"And this man Grevil met in Java, who travelled back with him—could anyone on the plane describe him?"

"One of the air hostesses gave us some material, but it was all rather unprecise."

"There'll obviously be other sources."

"Not so obviously. Between ourselves, we shouldn't be displeased to trace Buckingham. That's if he's the person we think he is. There's a man called Buckingham been in trouble two or three times in the Near and Far East since the war. He first appeared running Jewish immigrants into Palestine; there was a good deal of notice taken of him there because in the end he fell foul of the immigrants themselves. Then there was trouble in Cairo, and later we heard of him in Bangkok. He probably knows that a number of people would wish to interview him if he showed up, and not solely about Dr. Turner's death; so that will make him a less easy fish to net."

"Is he an Englishman?"

"We don't know. He travels on a British passport. The trouble is that almost all his activities have taken place outside our range of contacts. We have one fairly reliable description of him, but it isn't definite enough to help us when there's all Europe to search."

I said: "I want to go to Holland on Sunday. Can you give me the name of the man in charge of things over there?"

I could tell I was being thoughtfully looked over. "Is there any special point in your going at present, Mr. Turner?"

"There is, I think, to me."

Colonel Powell got up and twisted his pencil round in his fingers. "The investigations in Holland are not yet complete. Our Dutch friends are doing all they can and we're giving them full co-operation. I think, if you'll permit me to offer an opinion, that it might be a mistake to intervene personally at this point."

"I've only a short time in Europe and I'd prefer to know what exactly is being done now."

He frowned at his pencil. "I don't think the final conclusions we reach are likely to be very different from what they are now, do you? Everything points to your brother having killed himself as a result of this unfortunate love affair which had gone awry."

"Everything points to it, except Grevil's character. I think I knew him well. It's possible that I knew him better than anyone else. I mean to find out."

"Of course, I never met Dr. Turner. But from what I've been told I gather he was an impulsive man, wasn't he? Given to sudden decisions—*unusual* decisions sometimes."

"Such as?" I said, getting that dry feeling in my throat.

"Well, it was unusual, to say the least, for a young physicist rapidly coming to the front rank to abandon his work suddenly in 1942 and join the army and serve in the ranks."

"He could see where his physics were leading—towards the discovery of the atom bomb. He suddenly felt he could have no hand in it."

"A gesture perhaps, but a rather unavailing one. To throw away his whole career——"

"Evidence surely of being the one sane man."

Powell glanced at me. He could see I was angry. "Well, it's a matter of opinion, isn't it? But the quixotic sacrifice remains. It doesn't seem altogether out of bounds that a man who for a principle threw away his life's work might, on another occasion, throw away his life."

A clerk came in with a sheaf of papers. When he went out, neither of us spoke. It seemed to be rather a deadlock. Eventually I said more equably: "I'm afraid that what you've told me makes me more than ever sure I want to see things for myself."

Powell flipped through the papers. "Very well. Sir Derek asked me to help you in any way I can."

"I'd like a letter to the man in charge over there."

"Inspector Tholen. Very well." He pulled a sheet of paper abruptly toward him and began to write on it. After a minute he stopped and stared at the end of his pen. "It might just possibly be worth your while meeting Martin Coxon before you left."

"Who is he?"

"The one man we know who has met Buckingham. But it's a very old scent."

"I'd like to."

"He lives in Rye," Powell said. "He's one of those men who couldn't settle to civilian life after the war and went foraging for himself. We employed him ourselves once or twice but he hadn't quite the temperament for our work and so we've rather lost touch with him recently. Apparently he met Buckingham near Jaffa in the spring of '48. We haven't inquired too closely what Martin Coxon was doing off the coast of Palestine at that time, but I suspect he was turning a faintly illegal penny himself."

MARTIN COXON lived on the coast about a mile east of Rye in a biggish modern bungalow, one of the sort put up in the thirties without benefit of architect. You went along crazy paving flanked by big white stones and climbed five steps set in a rockery to a key-shaped front door, and the bell you pulled went *ding-dong*.

The door was opened by a tall, dark woman of about sixty who invited me into a living-room full of twentieth-century furniture. It was also littered with books, which made it look a lot better.

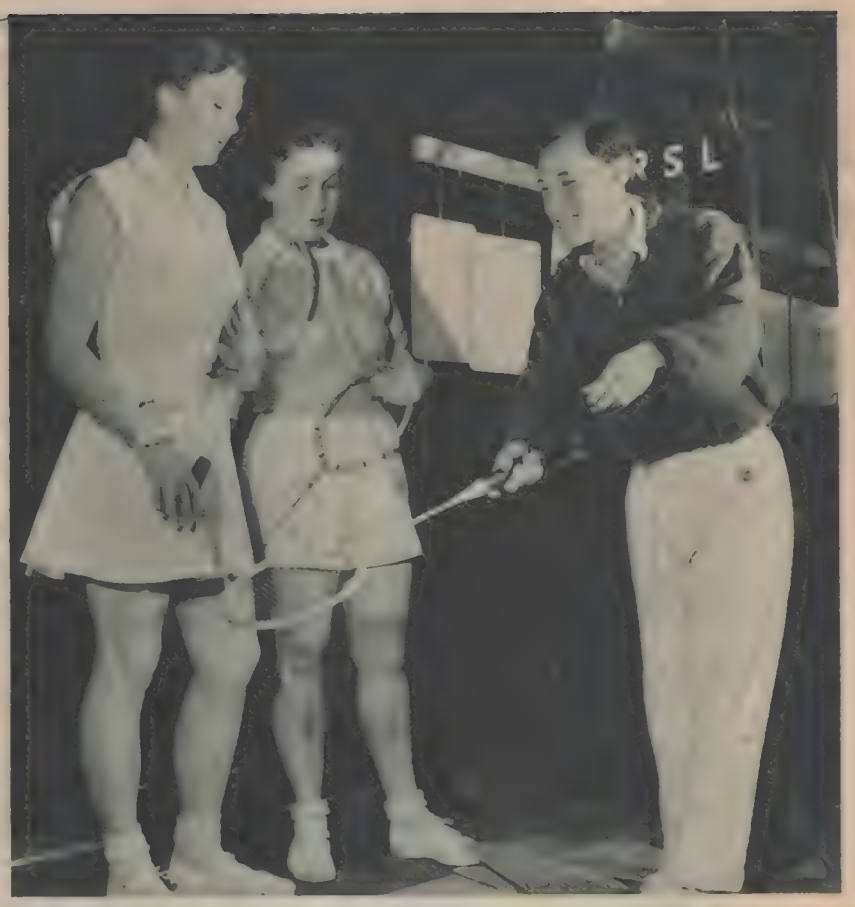
"I don't think my son will be long," she said in a genteel voice. "He's only shopping for me in Rye. I expected him before this."

I thanked her, but she still hung about the

Continued on page 35

I told her who I was and her face turned sullen. "You go to the police," she said. "Maybe they tell you something. Not me"

Even in practice, Choong (centre) wears out his opponents. After a long session, he is fresher than his brother David (left) or his cousin Robert



Choong demonstrates a shot to Pauline Roman and Patricia Boutle (right) at Wimbledon badminton club. He has done much to make the game popular

Champion Choong beats his rivals to a standstill

by WILFRED GREATOREX

He's a diminutive jack-in-the-box who lives only for badminton. With his boundless energy. he roves the world collecting titles—and exhausting every player he meets

FOUR TIRED MALAYAN STUDENTS, resting in the front row of seats of the otherwise empty Wimbledon Squash and Badminton Club on a recent afternoon, watched the end of a fast but one-sided game of badminton between two of their fellow-countrymen. The winner, a diminutive law student of five feet three inches and eight stone six pounds named Eddy Choong, then called one of the onlookers, his cousin, Robert, for another session.

Robert, however, was all in—and declined. For close on two hours, Eddy Choong had been beating his friends and relations, one after the other, and he was ready for more.

"It's Eddy's idea of a nice practice to play five or six of us in a row and then start round a second time," says Robert. "He thus has fresh opponents all the way through. It is hard to understand where he gets all his stamina."

In what many of its players and spectators regard as the most physically exacting game in existence, Eddy Ewe Beng ("Cheerful Friend") Choong has a capacity for outlasting and outplaying more strongly built opponents, and today ranks as unofficial world champion. Since he came to Britain in 1949, he has been cleaning up titles and championships—in doubles, mixed doubles and, mainly, singles events—in England, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Holland, France, Ireland, Canada, Scotland and the United States, with a philosophical dedication that still amazes those who know him best.

Will Travel Anywhere

"I never let my studies interfere with my badminton," he says. He won forty-eight national and other titles in 1950-51, forty-eight in 1951-52, forty-one in 1952-53, and twenty-five in 1953-54, when he also carried off the world invitation tournament. He is also the reigning all-England champion.

A sharp-eyed, single-minded jack-in-the-box of twenty-four with an urgent, restive manner, Choong is badminton's self-appointed ambassador. He will go anywhere, often at his own expense—he reckons to be £200 a year out of pocket through playing—to win a title or to help to develop the game in some badminton-backward country.

Working to a tight touring schedule two winters ago, Choong found himself fogbound at a Stockholm airport shortly after he had won the Swedish singles championship. He promptly went by boat and train via Copenhagen and the Hook of Holland to London and caught a plane to Canada, where he competed in tournaments and gave exhibitions in Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver and Halifax. He landed back in London just in time to travel to Dumfries for another title and to give further exhibitions in Scotland.

"He lost only one match on those travels," says Robert Choong. "The day he got back to London he telephoned to ask if I could practise with him next day."

Even in Britain, where badminton originated and whose players led the world until 1939, Choong has had what one player calls "a tremendous popularizing influence." Choong himself regrets that the cost of the game in Britain keeps many people out: in a normal week's practising, he helps to go through at least two

JOHN BULL PHOTOGRAPHS BY LAWRENCE HANLEY

dozen goosefeather shuttlecocks, costing 3s. 6d. each (he also has three 5½-oz. rackets made to his own specifications).

In spite of costs, however, the number of Britons playing and watching the game has steadily risen in recent years. Though Choong is not officially credited with this increase, much of it has taken place since he appeared. Today there are nearly three thousand clubs affiliated to the English Badminton Association, many unaffiliated, and others in Scotland, Wales and Ireland. The all-England finals nowadays draw a capacity crowd of eight thousand to the Empress Hall, London.

"Eddy is to badminton what Stanley Matthews is to football," says one player. "He's a vivid character who can get a crowd on its toes."

Choong's staying powers are already a legend. "He can keep it up for hours," says his brother David, "without looking any the worse for wear." That single defeat of his Canadian tour, at the hands of Canadian champion Don Smythe, occurred the day after Choong's non-stop journey from Europe. Within a week, he again met Smythe, and applied different tactics. In one rally the shuttle was kept going for sixty-eight shots.

One Opponent Fainted

"Eddy could have clinched the point earlier," says a witness, "but he was mercilessly taking toll of Smythe's stamina, and preferred to drag it out." Choong won the first game 15—12. Smythe was so exhausted that in the second game Choong had scored thirteen points before Smythe got his first. Choong eventually won 15—2, and the entire match had lasted two hours. It was not the first time Choong had won a game by attrition. Back in Malaya, one of his opponents was so worn down that he fainted on the court. "It was sad to look upon him," Choong says now.

Impulsive and almost totally preoccupied with badminton, Choong has a disturbing habit of calling on badminton-playing Malayans living in London at any time up to midnight to discuss tactics and theory into the small hours. Not long ago, after he had been winning games too comfortably for his own peace of mind, he called on cousin Robert and proceeded to theorize on the possible limits of his own physical effort.

He wondered how hard he could really go without exhausting himself. Could he win two straight games 15—1, 15—1? Two nights later he tested his idea on a fast, hard-hitting Malayan student from Cambridge named Johnny Heah, and won the first game easily. He was so wearied, however, that he lost the second. "For once," says David Choong, "he was not relating his pace and tactics to his opponent. It didn't pay."

Choong learned from that experience, as he does from most of his games. In an all-England championship some years ago, he was pegged down by another Malayan, Ong Poh Lim, who had previously gone near to defeating the only world-class player Choong has yet to beat, Wong Peng Soon.

Too Late To Do Good

Choong had been puzzled by Ong's near-success, but on the court he found the reason. Ong was smashing shots so fiercely on to his backhand that all he could do was to push the shuttle back down the line of the court. It meant that Ong needed to concentrate on only a fraction of his own area.

Choong spotted the tactics too late to do any good, but when he met Ong again in the Danish championships a few days later, he won.

Though he darts and leaps with acrobatic momentum, and reaches a flying shuttle many players would consider out of range—"I've seen him," says David, "make a shot with his body almost parallel to the ground"—Choong, in fact, conserves his energy with tactics carefully geared to his opponent's game. He divides them into power-play, defence—and deception. When he was seventeen and competing in the Penang State championships, he was so chased about the court that he could not sit down in comfort for two days. Since then, he has learned to vary and polish his game, to smash a shuttlecock at an initial velocity of about seventy miles an hour with a margin of error of only two to three inches, and to perfect every stroke in the book—as well as some that few people have ever seen before.

He Sped Out Of Danger

His timing and assessment of a shuttlecock's rate of deceleration come from what one of his friends describes as his fantastic reflexes. "It doesn't matter where you put a shot. He sees it big and springs at it with the reactions of a cat."

David tells of a time when he was teaching his brother to drive, and Eddy overshot the gateway to their home. "We were heading for a deep ditch. Most people would have braked and probably skidded, but Eddy accelerated, twisted the wheel sharply, and we were safe. I couldn't have done it."

Choong makes up in mental and physical agility what he lacks in stature. Short-armed, with stumpy, muscular legs, he is handicapped in reach against most opponents. He claims, however, that he gains quite a lot because nature made him close to the ground.

"I can get down faster to drop shots than taller players. I haven't as far to go." As he can bring his racket closer to his body more quickly, he also has an advantage with bodyline smashes. For a little man, he eats heartily and often, especially meat and fruit, but does no physical training—"practice games are enough"—and keeps late hours. "By staying up late," he says, "I'm adjusted to tournament conditions. Many games are played late at night, and those players who go to bed early are out of their element." According to Robert Choong, though, Eddy loses no sleep. "It's no use trying to get him before eleven or eleven thirty in the morning. He's still in bed."

The Deception Beat Him

In tournaments, Choong adopts an unfamiliar solemnity. But even in practice, his gaiety conceals a rigorous system of planned development and he concentrates variously on physical fitness, particular shots, tactics he will need against likely opponents and the sort of game he will have to play when he is older.

He has never forgotten the beating he took in 1951 from Wong Peng Soon, a player ten years his senior, whose game he regards as almost perfect. "I knew he had never resorted to smash tactics for ten to fifteen years," says Choong. "He must have realized what I was thinking, for against me he smashed. It was a form of deception that completely beat me."

Today, Choong is busy polishing up his own deceptions. "He won't always be able to rely on his stamina and agility," says David, "and he wants to be still at the top when he's thirty and more." Recently, a middle-aged enthusiast watched Choong practising his deceptions. Choong smashed over a shot which wrecked the last remaining shuttle, and his opponent, wet with sweat, started to leave the court to buy a fresh supply. But the spectator was enjoying it so much that he promptly threw in some new shuttles of his own to save time.

"It was a nice gesture," says one of Choong's friends. "But I'm not sure that Eddy's opponent was too happy about it. He was almost on his knees and would have been glad to have the break."

THE END

Eddy Choong, says a friend, has "the reactions of a cat." He can smash a shuttlecock across the badminton court at seventy miles an hour

Jane swung out the rifle, and pointed it straight at Marani. "Don't move," she said, "or I'll blow your head off"

ADRIATIC CROSSING

by VICTOR CANNING

ILLUSTRATED BY FANCETT

George felt sick with dismay. His plan to trick these killers would have worked perfectly, but for the girl. . . . The climax of a gripping story

THERE WERE TWO SHOCKS for George Parsons when he took a charter party on his yacht Doria from an Italian port. The first was when he found a stowaway—an American girl called Jane Dahl. The second was when the charter party forced him at gunpoint to sail for Albania.

They raided a gold bullion truck. But then, on the return, the Doria's engine broke down. With gunboats searching for them, they made for an island. As they approached it, George desperately worked out his next move. The gangsters were unlikely to leave witnesses alive. There was one faint hope: hidden below in the cabin was a rifle.

* * *

They made Astovo as the first light came up, revealing the long length of the island, an untidy sprawl of rocks, bare hillside and thick sweeps of juniper and broom bushes. They ran down it to the southern end. The shore was boiling with heavy surf. The sun came up lazily just as they made the little anchorage.

There was a short, right-angled length of rough quay, and behind it, built back into the rock of the steep-rising hillside, a couple of houses with pink fronts and turf roofs. As George put the helm over and nosed in, he saw a group of people come down from the houses and stand at the shoreward end of the quay, watching them.

They stood there very still, two men and three women; the women wearing scarves round their heads, coloured woollen jumpers and black skirts, and the two men, a little forward of the group, in breeches and loose shirts and wearing long, knitted caps. On the hillside behind them there was the slow movement of sheep, and a few hens and a goat wandered between the houses and the sea.

George put the Doria alongside and Orba jumped ashore and made fast. Doctor Veti motioned them all on to the quay with his revolver. Then, with Marani leading and Orba coming up behind, they moved up the quay.

Just beyond the Doria and closer inshore, an old motor boat lay alongside. As they came abreast of it, Marani stopped. He got a hold on one of the rough boulders with which the quay was strewn and rolled it over the edge. It fell straight into the motor boat six feet below and smashed clean through the bottom. The water poured into her.

The sound of the crashing boulder brought the little group at the end of the quay running towards them. The two men, both middle-aged, one with a black beard, shouted angrily, waving their arms, and behind them came the three women, one very old, hobbling along, while the other two flanked her protectively.

But when they were a couple of yards from Doctor Veti they pulled up suddenly and were silent. He had his automatic out.

Doctor Veti eyed them for a moment, his face puffy, the wind taking the edges of his damp overcoat, and then he began to talk to them in their own language. George could guess what was being said. They would behave themselves; they would do as he said, or else. . . .

George peered through the door. Slowly, he drew the gun from his shirt. This was the moment he had been waiting for. . .

They were simple folk, peasants, and he could see resignation on their faces as Doctor Veti spoke. All their lives they had been used to putting up with things, with the Italians, with the Communists, with the war, with the long, hard grind of living; and now here was something else. There was no fight in them. Only patience and the old decision to bow their heads and wait for the storm to pass.

Marani went up alone to the houses. After a time he came back carrying a couple of shotguns. He tossed them into the deep water. "No telephone," he said to Doctor Veti.

WITHIN ten minutes the island belonged to the three men. They took over one of the houses and the two young women were soon busy getting breakfast: eggs, a rough kind of fried cake, and a hot, black liquid that the islanders called coffee. George and the other two were penned within a triangle of which Doctor Veti, Orba and Marani formed the armed points.

The doctor huddled by the fire in the room, grumbling to himself bad-temperedly, but never relaxing, and Orba sat by the door, while Marani lounged by the low entrance to the kitchen where the two women worked.

The old woman and the men were outside somewhere or in the other house. George knew it would be useless to expect help from them. There was nothing they could do.

When they finished eating, the doctor looked at George and said: "Get on with that motor."

George took Sandro with him and went back to the Doria. Marani went with them and sat up on the quay, his gun out, smoking and watching everything they did. George went with Sandro into the main cabin to get tools and the box of spare parts. It was the first time he had been free in the cabin.

Sandro nodded towards the port bunk. "Is time to do something, signore?" Under the bunk and behind the water tanks were hidden the rifle and thirty rounds of ammunition.

George said: "We'll fix the engine first, Sandro. When we start to shoot we want to know we can get away fast."

Sandro nodded and then smacked one of the bullion cases with his palm, grinning. "Is lot of money, signore."

GEORGE got to work on the engine, with Sandro helping him. The sun climbed up into the sky. Marani sat smoking and humming to himself and after a while Orba came down and relieved him. It was hot in the engine well. Now and again when he came up for a breather, George cocked an eye at the mainland far across the channel. He could guess what was going on over there. Every patrol cutter along the coast would be alerted. The moment the engine was fixed, he had to get away—and without any of the three men.

At midday Jane came down carrying a basket of food. They broke off work and sat in the bows eating. After he'd eaten, George lay on the deck and smoked a cigarette. Marani, who had taken Orba's place, called down: "Don't waste time."

"Go and jump in the sea," George said. He already knew they couldn't finish fixing the engine that day.

"It's a good idea," said Jane smiling. "It's so hot I could do with a bathe."

George went below and found the girl's swimming costume and his own trunks. Marani began to bluster but George shut him up. "You'll get the motor done," he said, "but at my pace."

Jane changed in the cabin and they went over the side together. She had a good figure and she swam like a fish. When they were about fifty yards out they turned on their backs and floated. Keeping his voice down, George said: "Now listen to me, Jane. We're in a hell of a fix. There's just a chance we can pull ourselves out of it, but to do that we've all got to work together."

She said: "You've got the gun out?"

He said: "Not yet. When the time comes we'll use it. But our first job is to get the engine squared up."

She said: "I hate these men. They're murderers." She rolled over, flicking the water from

her hair. "When will the engine be ready, do you think?"

"Sometime tomorrow."

"Not before then?"

"No. It's a long job."

They said little after that, and in a few minutes headed back to the Doria.

The afternoon rolled by with Sandro and George up to their elbows in grease and engine parts, and all the time there was an ugly worry at the back of George's mind over the patrol cutters. He knew they would be combing these waters. Sooner or later one of them was going to call in at Astovo. Fortunately, their berth behind the high quay wall hid them from the sea, so that they were safe from anything passing up and down the channel between the island and the mainland.

When it got too dark to work any more on the engine, they went up to the house. The meal the women served was eaten in silence. When it was over, Doctor Veti said to George: "Can you not work at night on the engine?"

George shrugged. "If you like. But it'll mean rigging up a light you could see from the channel. Any cutter spotting it would come in."

"It is too big a risk," said Orba. "Tomorrow we should be away."

That night Jane was locked in a room off the main one with the two younger women. Sandro and George bunked down on the floor in the main room with two of the three men on guard all night. It wasn't until a couple of hours before dawn that George dropped off into an uneasy sleep.

The next morning he went down to the Doria and started work again with Sandro. While he kept at the engine he sent Sandro into the main cabin to get up the floorboards and restow the ballast. In the heavy rolling on the trip from Lechi some of it had moved. He could hear Sandro banging about inside.

He was bending over the motor when Orba suddenly jumped down on to the deck. As George looked up, the man came over to the engine well.

"Get away from the motor." The automatic was raised.

George backed away. Orba reached out and collected the sparking plugs that lay on the top of the tool box. The small eyes blinked in the pink, youthful face. "We don't want you leaving without us."

George said nothing, though his hand tightened round the spanner he was holding.

"Don't try it," said Orba.

George watched him climb back on to the quay. It meant, now, that when he got the rifle out it would have to be Orba who was on watch so that he could get the plugs back. By now he had his plan worked out. As soon as they were ready for sea, he would jump Orba and the other two men could be kept away with the rifle while he took the Doria out.

SOME time during the morning Jane came down to the boat with Marani, who was relieving Orba. She sat in the well with George. She was silent for a while, then she asked quietly: "How long will it be?" She nodded at the engine.

"This afternoon some time."

She said: "One of the women I slept with last night told me that a weekly patrol cutter is due to call in here this evening."

"Hell! We've got to get away before then."

After that he worked like a slave, and nothing seemed to go right. Bolts and small parts dropped to the floor and hid themselves and he seemed all thumbs. He kept on all through the afternoon and the thought of the cutter due to call that evening was like a goad.

Jane, bringing him a drink from the cabin, said quietly: "I've got your rifle out. It's loaded and under the bunk cushions."

George looked up at Orba. He was standing a few yards away. "How did you know where it was?" he asked.

"Sandro told me this morning."

Time went by like a dream. For George there was no other world except this hot engine-well inhabited by the black, squat form of the motor around which Sandro and he moved. From the galley near the cabin door Jane watched them work, and up above, Marani, who had relieved Orba, again sat smoking, a black silhouette against the blue sky.

And then, at last, they were through. All he needed was the sparking plugs. Marani would have to get Orba down and then George would deal with both of them.

He said to Sandro: "Collect up the tools." Looking up at Marani, he went on: "We are ready."

JANE heard him. She had been watching closely. From behind her back she swung out the rifle, and its muzzle was a couple of yards from Marani. He was looking straight down into it. "Don't move," she said steadily, "or I'll blow your head off."

There was nothing George could do but take things the way she had started them. Holding down his anger, he climbed up on to the quay with a spanner in his hand and moved up behind Marani. The man sat there like a statue, his hands in his pockets, not daring to move. George hit him behind the ear, hard, and he rolled over. He bent down and took his automatic from him. It would be some time before Marani came round.

Then he looked down at Jane, who was smiling. "Why the devil did you do that?" he snapped.

The smile went from her face. "But the engine's ready!"

"The engine's O.K. But the man we wanted was Orba. He has all the sparking plugs in his pocket."

Her face was shadowed with dismay. And then Sandro said: "Is 'a now, signore."

Orba was just comir own from the house. He halted abruptly at ne sight of Marani's body stretched out on the quay. He snatched out his gun and fired as George jumped for the deck of the Doria. Jane quickly rested the rifle on the top of the quay and fired back. The ground kicked up a foot from Orba and he dived for the cover of a grey rock.

Jane half turned and said: "George—I'm sorry. . . ."

"Forget it," George said. "Keep Orba covered and also the door of the house." As he spoke he saw Doctor Veti's head and shoulders appear in the doorway. Jane fired and Veti drew back. From the house to the left he heard a woman scream in panic and then he saw one of the men run indoors.

Under the lee of the quay they were in no immediate danger. George stood there for a moment wondering what to do. He had to have those sparking plugs. Orba edged his head round his rock and took a snap shot at them but it went wide. Jane returned the fire and the head withdrew smartly.

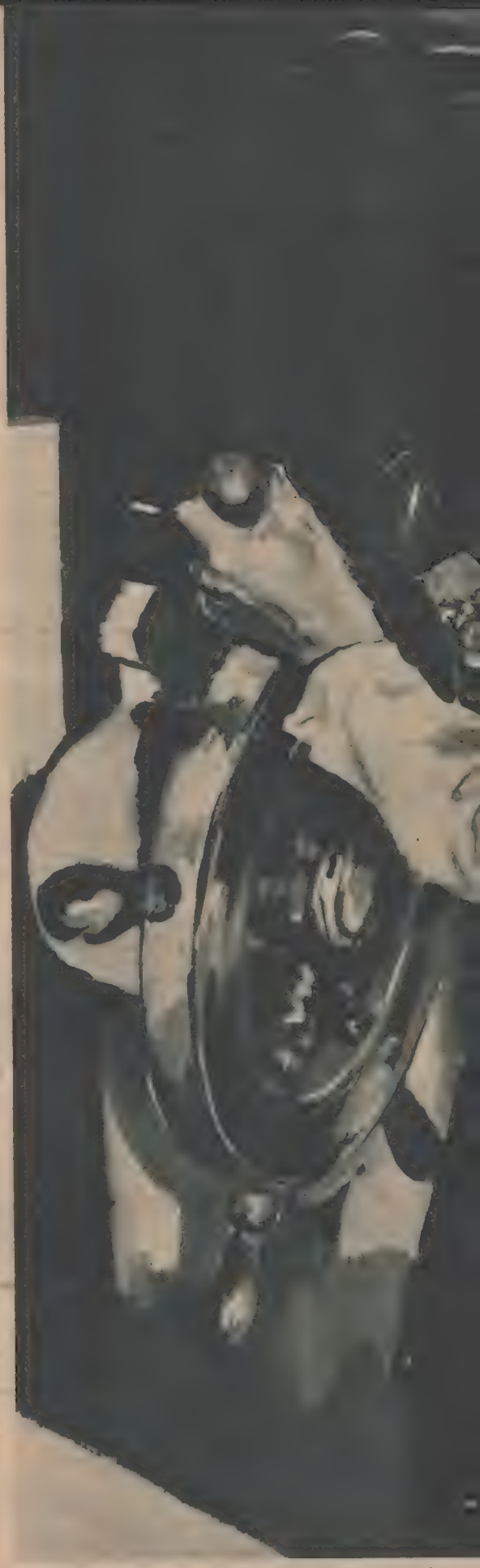
For a few moments then, nothing happened. George kicked off his shoes and in his shirt and trousers went to the side of the Doria.

"What are you going to do?" asked Jane.

"I'm going after Orba," he said grimly. "But first I must settle with the doctor. I'm going to swim out round the quay and get ashore. You keep them covered and let them have a shot now and then to pin them down."

He slipped in, Marani's automatic pushed inside his shirt, and began to swim out along the length of the quay, keeping close to the wall. His movements could not be seen from the island, but he knew that once he turned the far end of the quay and was swimming down the coast he would have to trust that Orba and the doctor would only have eyes for the Doria.

At the end of the quay he was in the open



"If we don't stop," said George, "they'll blow

and from there he let the current take him, keeping his head down. Fortunately, the water was choppy with small waves, and the sun-sparkle, he hoped, would make it difficult for anyone to spot him. Half drifting, half swimming, he made for a small out-thrust of rock about two hundred yards below the houses. Looking back, he could see the long arm of the quay, with the Doria's mast showing above it. Farther in, there was the black shape of Orba, sprawled behind his rock.

The roar of surf rose about him. He reached the out-jutting rock and dragged himself ashore, keeping low. To his right he could now and then hear the crack of a shot. Crouched low, he went up the beach, well hidden from the quay. The sun was dropping out of sight behind the island now. The evening was coming. He

us out of the water." Jane clutched at him. "We've got to get away! You don't understand!"

looked out to sea, scanning the waters of the channel. There was no sign of any craft.

He came to a small track that led to the two houses. He went on cautiously, and all the time he could see Orba lying behind his boulder, about fifty yards away from the nearest house.

GEORGE crept silently across the few yards of open ground to the side of the house. A small door led into the kitchen. He pushed it open and slid inside. One of the young women was there, pressed against the wall by the window. He put up a hand to warn her to keep silent, and crossed to the door leading to the main room. It was half open, and he saw Doctor Veti at once. He was standing back inside the front door, a bulky, untidy figure in his overcoat.

Slowly, George drew the gun from inside his shirt. This was the moment he had waited for. . . . Doctor Veti, who would have killed them all mercilessly. . . .

George moved forward. He had taken two steps when the doctor turned. George saw his hand come up with the automatic. Before Veti could fire, George flung himself at him and smashed his own gun down on the man's wrist.

The guns fell to the ground. George swung out at him with his right fist. It crashed into Doctor Veti's face and he went back with a grunt and a wheeze. But the doctor came back at him, bouncing off the wall like a great ball, and George saw his mouth open to shout a warning to Orba. He got his hands round the thick neck and choked the cry in him. They went down together, twisting across the floor.

It was a long time since he'd been in a rough house. As they rolled and slammed across the floor he had no mercy. He fought with a frenzy that would not be denied, battering and pounding at the heavy body.

Two minutes later, with help from the woman in the kitchen, George had the doctor in the bedroom where Jane had slept. He tied his ankles and hands and put a gag about his mouth. Veti came round as this was done and his eyes were full of malice. George gave the woman Veti's automatic and left the two of them there.

As he reached the main door of the house, there was a shot from the Doria and he saw the dust go up alongside Orba's rock He was lying stretched out with his back to him. There were fifty yards of open ground to cover. George stepped out, automatic in his hand, and began to walk towards him, going as quietly as he could, his eyes never leaving him.

Crossing the open space seemed to take an age. His wet shirt and trousers clung to him, hampering his movements, and the automatic began to weigh heavily in his hand. The small stones pocked the dust with long shadows, and he prayed that Orba wouldn't turn before he was close enough to be sure of his shooting.

There Orba lay, sprawled out, his fair hair bright above his dark windbreaker, and George knew exactly what he was going to do. When he was five yards from him he was going to shoot. He meant to take no chances with him. The man was dirty and evil . . . . But even so George knew he could not shoot him in the back. He should have a second to know what was coming to him.

TEN yards; George could see the back of Orba's windbreaker covered with dust and a small worn patch on the sole of his left shoe. Eight yards; and he saw the slight movement of the evening breeze in his pale hair. Five yards.

He said quietly: "Orba."

Orba's head twisted round. George raised his automatic and squeezed the trigger as Orba whipped over and started to rise to his knees to bring his gun to bear. The automatic misfired. There was only a miserable click.

In that moment Orba fired. The bullet tore through the loose stuff of George's trousers. George tried to fire again but the automatic was jammed with sand or water. He stood there, jerking desperately at the trigger, and nothing happened. Orba was on his feet now. A savage smile creased his face and he took his time, moving forward a step, his hand coming up slowly.

George knew there was no hope. This was it. There would be no return to Italy. No doctor in Rome would give him a clean bill of health. There would be no London, no fresh start in the job that still waited in the City.

Then, from the Doria, came the crack of a rifle and Orba, the smile still on his face, spun half round and dropped to the ground. The gun fell away from him, and he lay there groaning and clutching at his right arm.

George stood there, shaking his head, the echo of the shot ringing in his ears. Then he saw Jane, rifle in hand, climb to the quay and come running towards him with Sandro close behind her.

Jane's bullet had got Orba through the right shoulder. They stripped his windbreaker off and one of the island women bandaged him. The islanders were like excited children.

The man with the beard was the head man of the island and George got Jane to tell him to have his people take Marani and Orba up to the house. He would leave them the doctor's automatic and they could keep an eye on the three until the cutter came in.

As Jane finished giving his instructions she turned to him. "What about the gold?"

"We leave it here, of course. When the cutter

Continued on page 32

Bearded after their long spell in the Himalayas, Edmund Hillary (left) and George Lowe pose with Sherpas Tashi Phuta and Angputa

High Adventure (3) Sir Edmund Hillary's vivid personal story

We fight a giant whirlpool for our lives

GEORGE LOWE AND I had joined the British Cho Oyu expedition in Nepal in March, 1952. The expedition had two main aims: to train a pool of climbers for the British assault on Everest in the following year and to attempt to climb Cho Oyu, the seventh highest peak in the world. We tried our strength on Cho Oyu, only to be checkmated on its icecliffs. After that, we tackled more peaks, becoming acclimatized and familiar with work at heights when every step meant a fight for air. Meanwhile, a fully equipped Swiss expedition had begun an attack on Everest itself—an attack which, if successful, would make all our hopes and plans of no account.

After the return from Cho Oyu, Shipton, our expedition leader, suggested that George and I might like to have a go at crossing for the first time a pass called Nup La which lies to the north-west of Everest. I had always wanted to attempt the Nup La. In 1951, a party had tried to get up its great icefalls but had been forced back. But, apart from the satisfaction of making the first ascent of this formidable pass, George and I had other plans.

The Nup La lies at the head of the Dudh Kosi river and the Ngojumba glacier. On its far side it leads into the West Rongbuk glacier and the northern slopes of Mount Everest. We thought that, if we managed to get over the pass, we would do a quick trip visiting many of the famous places of the early Everest expeditions and perhaps attempt some climbs.

On May 19 George and I left Namche Bazar and climbed up a thousand feet to the village of Khumjung. This was where our Sherpas Angputa and Tashi Phuta lived. We spent the night in Angputa's house and were royally entertained by his charming young wife and his aged parents. The Sherpa home is a strongly built and commodious structure. A well-to-do home is of two storeys with the walls made of rocks plastered together with mud. The roof is usually overlapping slabs of pine with great rocks to hold it all down. The ground floor is the storeroom and the shelter for the animals, while the family lives on the second floor.

George and I crouched round the crackling fire and ate a huge meal of omelet and boiled potatoes, followed by a dessert of curds and *tsampa* (roasted barley). A cup of tea completed our feeling of contentment.

Employed Young Sherpa Girl

For the next two days our little caravan wound its way slowly up the deep valley of the Dudh Kosi. The scenery was superb and as we were travelling at a leisurely pace we enjoyed every bit of it. We had three of our permanent Sherpas with us—Angputa, Tashi Phuta and Angje—and half a dozen casuals, mostly fresh-faced and energetic youths. In the middle of the second day we came to a small village where we managed to purchase eighty pounds of potatoes, and employed a very attractive young Sherpa girl to carry them.

Immediately the whole atmosphere of the party lightened. The young men were dashing about like a bunch of colts, seeking to outdo each other with witticisms and laughter. The loads on their backs were quite forgotten and they fairly galloped up the valley. It was significant, however, that although all the young men did their best to impress our fair employee, not one of them offered to carry part of her considerably heavier load. Among the Sherpas a woman expects and receives no favoured treatment when it comes to carrying a load.

Our river route back from the mountains was leading straight into disaster. "Hang on to the raft, George," I said, "it's our only chance!" A moment later we were spinning helplessly in the grip of the roaring torrent

In the afternoon we climbed up the trough beside the Ngojumba glacier to a small grazing village beside a lovely lake called Dudh Pokari, and there we camped. It was snowing next morning, and we felt very reluctant to start, but we had been going only about an hour when the weather cleared remarkably quickly and the snow started melting before our eyes in the sun's fierce heat. It was a typical Himalayan change—one moment it was miserably cold and the next unbearably hot.

We pitched our tents on a little mossy terrace beside a crystal clear glacial pond and gathered armfuls of fuel from the stunted shrubs clothing the hillsides.

I climbed up on to the edge of the glacier for a look at the way ahead. Towering over us on the left was the enormous face of Cho Oyu and to the north of it, in one great sweep, stretched peak after peak, culminating in the summit pyramid of Everest itself. I couldn't really tell where the Nup La was, but it was quite obvious that next day we would have to cross the glacier in order to approach it.

In the morning it was clear and frosty, and we started off very early. We continued up beside the glacier for a short distance and then dropped down a steep moraine (rock debris) wall on to the bare ice. We were soon on the far side and continued on up it to where the glacier turned sharply to the left. On the corner the ice was crushed and broken, and it took us a long time to find a way through it. We were forced to climb up another steep moraine wall into the trough behind it and then, having followed up this trough for a short distance, came up on to a little crest We stopped aghast at the view ahead.

The approach to the pass was far worse than I had expected. In front of us a great icefall tumbled down thousands of feet in an utter chaos of shattered ice. The icefall was split by a great rock buttress and the ice surged round it like the bow wave of a destroyer. It was a vast and spectacular sight, but I felt completely subdued at the thought of finding a way up it. The right-hand icefall with its row after row of tottering ice pinnacles looked decidedly dangerous and the left-hand one crashed over an enormous rock bluff almost continuously. No wonder that the 1951 party had brought back such lurid tales.

We pitched our tent on the ice at the foot of the right-hand icefall and paid off all the Sherpas except our three permanent ones. They had been a very happy party and I was sorry to be losing their companionship. As they disappeared down the glacier, I stood with George and Angje looking up at the icefall.

"*Bohut kharab* (very bad), *sahib!*" said Angje. As he spoke there was a sullen rumble and a hundred yards of icecliff leaned over and avalanched downwards with frightening force. I agreed that it was indeed "*Bohut kharab!*"

In the afternoon I went off on a rather aimless solo reconnaissance. I had noticed a small gap between the right-hand icefall and the rock buttress and wanted to see if it was possible to get far up it. I found it quite easy scrambling over loose boulders, but finally I couldn't get any farther—the icecliffs closed into the rock in an impassable wall.

Cooking Fire Was A Luxury

Next, I walked over to the foot of the main buttress and examined it closely. It looked a difficult problem, but I thought I could see a line of ascent at least up the first half. The greatest danger seemed to be falling rocks, which came down regularly every few minutes. I returned to camp and told George of my discoveries. We decided to attempt the rock buttress next day.

Our meal was cooked over the unusual luxury of a wood fire, as we had brought a load of dry juniper wood up with us. As we crouched round it warming ourselves in the chilly night air, Angje took a few glowing twigs and placed them on a small flat stone. He then added a tiny dab of butter and watched it splutter and smoke while he murmured softly to himself. We asked him the meaning of this ceremony. He explained that it was a little offering to propitiate the gods of the ice so that we might have a safe passage. The gift of butter, together with the Buddhist invocation, *Om Mani Padme Hum* ("Glory to the jewel in the lotus"), assured us of the kindly attentions of the gods. We went to sleep with Angje's prayers a background to our worried minds.

George and I were at the foot of the rock buttress by 7.30 next morning, before the sun had loosened the rocks from their frozen beds. We scrambled on to the bottom of a narrow

ledge that climbed steeply up the face, and made our way up it as quickly as we could. Above us now was a steep rock couloir [gulley or furrow in a mountainside]. I led off up it and found it quite easy going. But at the top was a great chockstone completely blocking the way. I couldn't see any route over it. I cut a line of steps across the steep, hard snow below the chockstone and while George climbed up to join me, I looked gloomily at the move ahead. It was a smooth, holdless slab and there was nothing but friction to get me up it.

Summoning my courage I plunged upwards. With quivering muscles I balanced on the steep slab on my hands and knees, and then quickly threw a hand over the top and dragged myself to safety. I took in the rope and George unashamedly called for a tug and slithered up to join me. We agreed that any hope of getting laden Sherpas up here was pretty remote. But we decided to keep going. An hour later we were a hundred feet farther up the cliff and fairly sure we couldn't get a foot higher.

Huge Ice Blocks Crashed Down

We arrived back in camp a quiet and subdued pair. We were met by Angje with the familiar "*Bohut kharab.*" He told us that the Sherpas had watched our progress with great admiration, but that they had no intention of following our example and going up the bluffs. We assured him that we had no further intention of going up there either.

Later in the afternoon Angputa and I went for a stroll up the left-hand valley to examine the other icefall. It was an impressive place. The main body of the icefall came to a sudden halt at the edge of a thousand-foot bluff and broke off in huge chunks and crashed to the glacier below. It looked a hopeless lead, and a dangerous one, but I decided to go on a bit farther.

I climbed up on to a rounded ridge of moraine and ice that swept along in a great curve to the left-hand side of the icefall. It was quite easy going and certainly safe enough. The farther we got along the ridge the more the route opened out before us. I stopped and had a long look. I felt stirrings of excitement. Although the icefall was well broken on this side, it wasn't as active, and it appeared that there might be a route up on to the icecliffs above the bluffs. It didn't look by any means an easy route, but it was the only place on the whole icefall that looked at all safe from overhanging ice. Darkness was approaching and we hadn't time to go any farther, so we hurried back to camp.

The Sort Of Job We Liked

George and I set off at 6.30 a.m. next morning to try to follow this route. We were feeling fit and reached the limit of my previous day's explorations in a very short time. George, no doubt with memories of the rock buttress in his mind, was a little doubtful of my enthusiastic "easy route," but as he looked ahead he admitted that it had decided possibilities. We roped up, put on our crampons and then started upwards.

At the start we made quite good progress up some moraine between the icefall and the high rock bluffs on the left. But slowly we found ourselves being forced into the icefall itself. It was a criss-cross of deep crevasses—a problem that was going to take a long time to solve. But this was the sort of job we really liked. We hacked steps up icewalls; cautiously crossed slender snowbridges; cut our way down into each crevasse and out the other side. It was exhilarating work and we were making stubstantial height.

We had only one worry. The angle of the crevasses was slowly but surely driving us towards the shattered edge where the icefall took its last, long jump. We could even feel the

The girl who carried the team's potatoes. The Sherpas admired her—but didn't offer to help

subterranean quiver as each fresh acre of ice broke off. We were getting uncomfortably close when fate relented and we found a snowbridge which led us back into the centre again. At 10.30 a.m. we cramponed on to a snowy knoll and saw in the far distance, across the snow fields, the Nup La—a gentle, 19,400-foot dip between 24,000-foot precipices.

It was a great moment! For a few seconds we shouted and waved in self-esteem and satisfaction. It was still a long way to the saddle but there didn't seem to be many difficulties in between. We decided to return immediately to camp and to start carrying up equipment the next day.

The Sherpas greeted us as cheerfully as usual but there was a certain restraint in the atmosphere when we told them of our plan to take them up the icefall with loads. And that night the *Om Mani Padme Hum's* reached a new crescendo with all three Sherpas joining in.

I had a restless night due to the excitement and woke very early. There was only need for one of us to take the Sherpas up, so George was having a day off. We left the camp at 6 a.m. and it was cold and crisp. We all had substantial loads but the Sherpas were going very well. When we roped up and put our crampons on, the pace dropped off considerably and I heard Angje's familiar *Bohut kharab!* as we came to each new and difficult pitch.

But Angje, for all his doubting comments, was a strong and stout-hearted chap. It was Tashi Phuta who displayed the least confidence in his sahib. He examined each snowbridge with extreme care and he poked so many holes in them with his ice-axe that he reduced their efficiency by at least half. Then he crawled across on his hands and knees. But despite this, all of them were really climbing extremely well. We reached the crest of the icefall at 9.30 a.m.

I decided to continue on a little farther. We dropped down off the snow mould and crossed an easy flat ahead. Confident that there were no difficulties in front of us, I walked dreamily on feeling in imagination that we had already dropped our loads on the Nup La. I stopped on the edge of an enormous crevasse. It was a vast chasm, at least a hundred feet wide, and it split the icefall from side to side. All my dreams collapsed! This was the toughest problem we had struck yet. I looked over the edge. Sixty feet down, the crevasse was bridged with unstable-looking snow—itself split by minor crevasses. It looked a ghastly place, but I thought that if we could get down on to the bridge we might get across.

I searched along the crevasse until I found a place where the lower lip had broken in a little. The Sherpas seemed reluctant but I made sure that they had a good belay and then started to cut a staircase down the fractured icewall into the snow-filled bottom. It was difficult work and I had to make big steps, so it was more than half an hour before I could step cautiously out on to the bottom. I thrust my ice-axe firmly into the side of the crevasse as a belay and then persuaded the Sherpas to follow me down.

Hacked Steps In Snow Cone

We stood in a subdued little group in the depths of this great chasm and I looked across at the other wall. It towered sixty feet above us—hard, clear ice. But there was a possible gap in its armour. In one place, banked up against the wall, was a cone of snow which almost reached the top. It was worth a try.

I warned the Sherpas to keep the rope tight and then I started picking my way cautiously across the snow, stepping over the numerous cracks in its surface until I reached the other wall. The snow cone shot up very steeply but it seemed to be firm and stable. I didn't really like doing such technical climbing with only Sherpas on the rope, but I had to make a route somehow. I cut a steep flight of steps twenty feet upwards and then dug out a platform large enough to stand on comfortably. Then, with a tight rope, I brought the three Sherpas up and anchored them safely on this platform. They didn't say anything, but their wide, frightened eyes showed that they weren't enjoying it much.

I cut another line of steps to the top of the snow until only six feet of hard, vertical ice separated me from the top of the crevasse. Feeling very exposed on my minute perch, I commenced hacking a route up the ice wall. It wasn't easy work. In order to keep on the steps I had to cut out hand holes and take all my weight on these. It was a good moment when I reached over the top and thrust my ice-axe firmly into the hard snow. A wriggle and a grunt and I was out. I stood there for a moment regaining my breath. We were well over 19,000 feet and an effort such as this was a great strain on the lungs.

Dragged Sherpas Up On Rope

I looked ahead. To my utter disgust another crevasse, almost as big as the one I had just crawled out of, barred my way. Where was the nice, easy route that George and I had seen? We must have been blind! The faint cry of "Sahib! Sahib!" brought me back to my senses and I hastened back to look down at the three Sherpas clinging to their airy ledge forty feet below. I knew I would have to tow them up the last section. Getting a good firm stance and placing the rope over my shoulder, I called to them to come on up. Then, like three sacks of coal, I dragged them firmly over the top. They were very glad to be there.

It was increasingly obvious to me now that

there was still some difficult country between us and the Nup La, and I sadly regretted that George wasn't up there to give me a hand. I decided to leave all our loads in this spot and to do a reconnaissance ahead without them. I moved up and had a look at the next crevasse. Well, at least it was a bit easier to get into, although the snow in the bottom looked decidedly unstable.

We crossed the crevasse in much the same manner as before and continued on over some more dangerously crevassed country. The farther we went the more there seemed to be between us and the Nup La. We stopped, in the end, on the edge of a great drop which overhung the shattered morass of the right-hand icefall. This way was impassable. It might be possible to get around to the left but I wanted George up here with me before I dared try it.

Decided On All-out Attempt

We returned back to the two great crevasses and I lowered the Sherpas down their steep walls. And then, with a feeling of frustration, I led them back through the labyrinth of the icefall and down to camp.

At first I didn't feel very optimistic as I told George about our day's efforts. We were lying in our sleeping-bags in the tent and the Sherpas were chanting softly. But somehow, down here talking to George, the problems up top seemed so much easier. In the end we decided to make an all-out attempt to reach the Nup La on the following day.

We had packed up all our gear and had breakfast by 8 a.m. It was unusually mild and we didn't like the heavy clouds down the valley. The season was quickly passing—it was now May 27—and we feared the onset of the monsoon. We didn't waste any time as we went up the easier part of the glacier, especially when we found part of our tracks had been wiped out by an avalanche of ice falling from the hanging glaciers clinging to the bluffs above us. We were soon roping up and putting on our crampons. And then we started through the more difficult country.

We had expected trouble with the two great crevasses and we weren't disappointed. Even with George's expert help we had a tough job crossing them. The softening of the snow had made my routes up and down their steep walls decidedly unreliable, but George and I got up somehow and hauled the Sherpas behind us.

Sudden Shriek Startled Us

With each moment the snow seemed to be getting softer and softer. George led off across the murky expanse of the snow plateau, searching continuously with his ice-axe for concealed crevasses. And he found them everywhere. We were startled by a sudden shriek from Tashi Phuta and turned round to find only his head visible above the snow. Foolishly, he had strayed a few feet off George's track and found a crevasse for himself. George was holding him tightly on the rope and I carefully worked my way over towards him—prodding every inch of the ground. I got close enough to grasp his arm and then we dragged him out of the crevasse. It was only his pack that had stopped him from dropping down it like a stone.

I peered down the hole he had made and could see hard, green ice disappearing down into a black void. I stepped back hastily and sank to my knees in another hidden crack behind me. Quickly I had to stifle a rising feeling of panic. The Sherpas were frankly scared and we couldn't afford to let them see that we were, too.

We slowly moved onwards, testing the ground with care before we dared step on it. Yet many times we were up to our knees in unsuspected holes, and clumsy Tashi Phuta sank down to his neck once more before the rope held him. The snow was in such poor condition

Continued on page 42

Despite crevasses, falling rocks and hanging glaciers, Hillary's party mounted the icecliffs of Nup La. Frightened Sherpas placated their ice gods with prayers and offerings of burnt butter

Marriages

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If you are getting married between March 1st and August 31st this year, and reside in U.K., we shall be very happy to make you a present of 3 full-size two-tablet packs of Puritan and a 32-page booklet on home washing to help you with your housekeeping.

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The start of another tour of Europe. . . . Stanley Mason (extreme right) chats beneath the white cliffs before entering Dover Car Ferry Terminal

Stanley Mason pilots the holiday cars

by JOHN SANDILANDS

To motorists who seek the pleasure spots of Europe, he is pathfinder, mentor and nurse. On road tours, he covers 40,000 miles a year—and solves 40,000 problems

ON A HOLIDAY CAR RALLY through Italy in 1948, Stanley Mason, the rally organizer, was called to the telephone at the hotel where the rallyists were spending the night. An Italian policeman told him that one of his party had assaulted a shopkeeper, resisted the efforts of four men to arrest him and was now held at the police station while charges were being prepared.

Mason jumped into his car and raced to the police station. "It took nearly three hours of apologies, pleas and threats to get the man released," he says.

Later, he discovered that the offending tourist had been a prisoner of war of the Italians. Finding that the proprietor of a local clothes shop had been trying to overcharge him, he allowed several years of resentment to get the better of him and emptied a drawer-full of socks over the Italian's head. When the police were called, he had made the situation considerably worse by putting up a very stout resistance.

For Mason, a large, cheerful, former racing motorist, the incident was just one more hazard overcome in the job of shepherding holiday motorists through the pleasure spots of Europe.

As director of the Motorists' Travel Club, formed in 1946 to make Continental motoring available to car enthusiasts unfamiliar with foreign roads and conditions, he drives more than 40,000 miles a year and, he says, finds the answers to an equal number of problems.

"Mason's knowledge of Continental travel is encyclopaedic," says one of his staff. "On a rally, he acts as information bureau, currency expert, interpreter, friend of the family, mentor and nurse, and, surprisingly, he has never been known to lose his temper."

Arranging the nightly accommodation of forty or fifty people is often a severe test of his patience. On a trip through Germany with an extra-large party, Mason arrived at one hotel to discover that the manager had sent some of the tourists to another hotel.

"There were three honeymoon couples in the party," Mason recalls. "Unfortunately, the manager had arranged the bookings so that the three husbands were in one hotel while the three wives were in the other. I spent a long time rearranging the bookings."

To ensure that his parties have no accommodation problems, Mason has always to be

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DAY OF DARKNESS

by JAY WILLIAMS

ILLUSTRATED BY WILLIAM LITTLE

An eclipse? What nonsense! Umfefe the Evil One was eating the sun. They must make him cough it up again

CHIEF KARUMI found himself in a terrible dilemma. The fact was, he faced either heresy of the most blatant sort, or the total destruction of the sun.

It all began with the arrival of the astronomical expedition. They had come bearing gifts, but Karumi soon found that, like the Greeks in similar circumstances, they were not to be trusted. They settled just outside the village with their trailers and motor-buses, and by evening a second village of tents had sprung up which put Karumi's hundred huts to shame. And that evening, at the banquet tendered to the leaders of the expedition, Karumi learned to his horror what they were after.

He began, circuitously and politely, by referring to the equipment they had brought, and said that he assumed they would be looking for big game.

"You might call it that," said Doctor Ankley, the expedition head. "We're going to shoot the sun."

Karumi drew back and passed his hand over his mouth. Speaking simply, as one might to a child, he said: "You are joking."

"Well, in a sense I am joking," Doctor Ankley replied. "You see, there's going to be an eclipse in a couple of days. We plan to take pictures of it." He pursed his lips, for the interpreter could not translate the word "eclipse." "The sun will—will disappear during the day," the scientist explained. "It will be covered by shadow. During that time we will take photographs of the—er—the proceedings."

Karumi looked at the ground so that he should not seem to be mocking his guests. "But surely the doctor is not serious. How can darkness fall during the daytime? And how can the gentleman know this in advance?"

Doctor Ankley said: "Why, it's quite simple. The moon will pass between the earth and the sun. By studying the movements of the heavenly bodies, we can predict the moment of convergence."

Chief Karumi quietly drank a calabash of beer. Then he said: "My grandfather once told me that long ago the sun was blotted out in the daytime. But it was not because the moon came between the earth and the sun. As a matter of fact, the notion is preposterous: if such a thing were to happen, the moon would be consumed in the sun's flames.

"What actually happened was that Umfefe the Evil One swallowed the sun. We have a prescribed ritual for such occasions. The village went into mourning at once, ritual assegais were broken and hurled at Umfefe, and the Chief performed a certain secret ceremony which proved so efficacious that Umfefe was forced to disgorge the sun. Had it been otherwise, we should be living in a dark world at this moment."

He smiled patronizingly. "It's quite simple, really," he said. "There need be no mumbo-jumbo about it—no prattle of moon shadows and moving earth. Does the doctor think I am still a child?"

Another man might have been content to let matters rest, but Doctor Ankley was one half dogged Scot on his mother's side, and one half stubborn Hollander on his father's.

"Look here," he said. "The sun is millions of miles away from the earth. The moon is millions of miles from the sun. That's the reason the moon is not consumed in the sun's flames. Certainly Chief Karumi knows that the moon moves. You see it rise every night, don't you? It is a fact that the earth moves. And the moon goes round the earth."

"We also see the sun rise each morning," said Karumi.

"It doesn't really rise," Doctor Ankley said, passing his stumpy fingers through his short, stiff, grey hair. "It only appears to because the earth continually turns towards it and away from it. Well, at one point the three bodies are all in line, with the moon between the earth and the sun."

"If all this is so," Karumi said slyly, "what keeps us from feeling the movement of the earth?"

"It's too big," said Doctor Ankley. "And we are too small by comparison." He was beginning to feel harassed.

KARUMI closed his eyes. "I'm sorry," he said. "The whole thing is ridiculous. I cannot feel myself to be a midget. If what you say is true, our religion would have told it to us long ago. What it does tell us, however, is that there is a demon Umfefe and that at certain intervals he *may* try to swallow the sun. Now that's all clear and straightforward enough, isn't it?"

Doctor Ankley let out his breath explosively. "Ask the chief," he said to the interpreter, "how he can be so cocksure his religion is right."

When the question was translated, Chief Karumi sat up very straight. "Our religion has been handed down from father to son for generations," he said. "The tenets of our faith were given us originally by the Great Batu himself. I hope," he added, with just a trace of asperity, "you don't mean to imply that Batu is a liar?"

"No, no, of course not," Doctor Ankley protested, pulling himself up short, just in time. "Well, then, suppose on Thursday—two

"This nonsense has gone f

enough," said Chief Karumi. "You must pack up and go." Doctor Ankley exploded. "I have no intention of going. You can go jump in the lake"

days from now—the sun actually disappears in the middle of the morning?"

"Then I must agree that your advance information is amazingly accurate," said Karumi. "It will mean that you have succeeded in learning from Batu Himself that Umfefe plans to eat the sun."

"Hum. Suppose the sun comes out again after a few minutes?"

"That will mean our measures have been well taken," Karumi said. "Naturally, the moment the sun vanishes we will begin our ceremony."

"Damn the ceremony!" Doctor Ankley shouted. "*Don't* begin your ceremony. Let it go. And you'll see whether I'm right or not. There will be an eclipse, and you can't alter it one bit!"

Karumi was a little shocked by the scientist's lack of control. "I'm afraid I can't take that chance," he replied. "Suppose we were to do as you say and Umfefe swallowed the sun after all? We should perish for lack of warmth and light. Why, that would be failing in our obligation to the whole world—including the good gentleman's own country."

Chief Karumi rose to his feet. "If the doctor is—I hesitate to say 'foolish,' but there is no other word—foolish enough to believe that the earth is spinning around like a possessed thing, I and my people at least shall keep our heads." And on this sober note, he withdrew.

JUST as he was settling down for the night, the witch-doctor, Afadigumu, stamped outside his hut. "Karumi," said the witch-doctor. "I must talk with you."

The chief got up grumpily and went outside. It was a perfect night, brilliant and full of stars. "What is it now?" he asked.

The witch-doctor had a thin, feral face, handsome and crafty. "These scientists and their insane notions," he said. "They have upset the whole village. Some of the young men are muttering that there is no Umfefe and that those scientists know more than we do of the ways of the world."

Karumi raised an eyebrow. "Heresy?"

"Worse than that, Karumi. It can become rebellion."

The chief stirred uncomfortably. "Tell me, Afadigumu, do you think it's just barely possible that the scientists are right?"

The witch-doctor jerked upright in alarm. "Karumi!" he said. "Great heavens! What has got into you?"

The chief moved his shoulders uneasily.

"What we face," Afadigumu went on, after regarding him quietly for a moment, "is the influence of materialism. We may as well be realistic about it. Suppose Umfefe begins to eat the sun at the exact time that Doctor Ankley claims he will. Score one for the doctor. The tribe will go into ritual mourning. Then suppose the sun comes out again. Eh?"

"We'll take the credit, of course," said Karumi.

"But so will Doctor Ankley, for he will claim he predicted it."

The chief belched thoughtfully. "Well," he said, "I must sleep on it. Tomorrow we will have a discussion with the elders. Perhaps I can get in touch with my father's ghost. We'll see."

At the conference the following day the Chief was in a more sombre mood than ever. Young men were standing about the compound in ominous knots, whispering among themselves, and at least half the village was over in the expedition's quarters, eyeing the long barrels of the telescopic cameras which pointed like artillery at the sky. Doctor Ankley, with a blackboard, was drawing diagrams for an open-mouthed and admiring audience.

Karumi sat in the dark, circular House of the Ghosts, and took a pinch of snuff. To the greetings of the elders he made no answer. Only when Afadigumu entered did he speak.

"Last night," he said, "I succeeded in placing

Anxiously, Afadigumu swished the zebra tail. Karumi looked up at the shrinking sun. "It's beginning, all right," he said

myself in a small trance. Unfortunately, the only spirit I managed to reach was that of my wife's cousin, Masumba, a notorious half-wit."

He looked about moodily; one or two of the old men nodded their recollection of Masumba.

Afadigumu said: "Well? What was his suggestion?"

"He said: 'Let Umfefe eat the sun.'"

The elders clicked their tongues. But Afadigumu closed his eyes, threw back his head and chuckled in a blood-curdling way. "It's not a bad idea," he said.

"What?" Karumi cried. "It's perfect nonsense. We'd make our point, but we'd have to live in total darkness for the rest of our lives."

AFADIGUMU said: "That's true. We can keep torches burning, however. The alternative is the end of our faith, the collapse of the state, and—I'm afraid, the end of a hitherto long and prosperous reign for you."

"Are you serious?"

"Perfectly," said the witch-doctor. "Have you seen the crowds over at the expedition's camp?"

Karumi stood up. He looked every inch a king, the plumes of his head-dress almost touching the roof, mantled with dignity and crowned with authority, so that the elders fell on their faces in awe.

"I shall try once more," he said, "to settle this affair sensibly."

He stalked out into the sunlight and went at once to the tents of the expedition. It turned him cold with rage to see how few of his people even glanced up as he passed, so engrossed were they in examining the instruments, and in fingering the cool, smooth metal of meters, cameras and spectographs. Doctor Ankley came to meet him, waving a bundle of notes.

"Well, well," the scientist said, through his interpreter, "this is indeed an honour. What would the chief like to look at first?"

"I don't wish to look at anything. I have only one thing to say. I ask, respectfully but firmly, that this whole affair be called off."

Doctor Ankley's mouth fell open. "Call it off? What do you mean?"

"Just that. This moon-shadow nonsense has gone far enough. My village is being disrupted. I cannot permit it to continue. You must pack up and go."

Doctor Ankley turned livid, and his little blue eyes behind their horn-rimmed glasses sparkled balefully. "I'm sorry," he said. "I have no intention of going. The eclipse will take place, no matter what you want. It will be a normal eclipse. It will last exactly three minutes forty-eight seconds. At the end of that time the sun will be shining again. I don't wish to seem disrespectful, but you can go jump in the lake."

He shut his mouth with a snap. Karumi turned without another word, and went away. Behind him, he felt the eyes of his people boring into his back, and he knew that they were murmuring louder and louder.

ON Thursday, at 09.40 hours, a strange and frightening dimness was perceptible, as the tiniest speck of darkness began gnawing at the side of the solar disc. The scientists, who had been ready for hours, began work in earnest. There was something startling and a little awesome about their work: it was composed of a feverish intensity and very little actual movement. Cosmic ray counters stammered and clicked, meters hummed, cameras buzzed quietly, small lights flashed off ond on, and high in the air sounded the drone of the plane which had flown in to take photographs.

In the compound of Karumi's folk, the drums sounded, and above them a high, thin wailing from the rows of women who squatted together with their heads covered by their arms. Karumi came out of the Ghost House and looked up, shading his eyes with his hand. Afadigumu, in full-dress regalia, waving a zebra tail anxiously, stood beside him.

"Well?" he said.

"It's beginning, all right."

The wailing rose around them. The drums quickened their beat, the little drums yammered and the big basses growled their distress. Karumi turned.

All at once, ten of his young warriors got up very deliberately. They had not broken their spears, and went all together to the gate of the compound and walked through it without a sound. They headed for the expedition's camp.

Karumi did not shout after them; it would have been highly undignified. But Afadigumu spat at their retreating backs.

Half a score more followed. The women stopped their wailing and stared, round-eyed and startled. The old men fingered the broken shafts of their spears, and scratched themselves uneasily. Karumi said, in a loud, clear, doom-laden voice: "Very well. So be it. Let the world perish in darkness.

He sat down before the Ghost House, and Afadigumu, seeing how the wind blew, settled calmly at his side.

"In any case," he said, "it will be colder in the good doctor's country than in ours."

Thus the ceremony was not completed. Umfefe therefore swallowed the sun. THE END

2

Keep his mind on the game – I had to remind him every time it was his move. Hardly surprising, then, that I won hands down!

And I think I know where his thoughts were, for he produced today a box of those gorgeous Black Magic chocolates – those delicious centres – and said

THE REST
OF THE STORY

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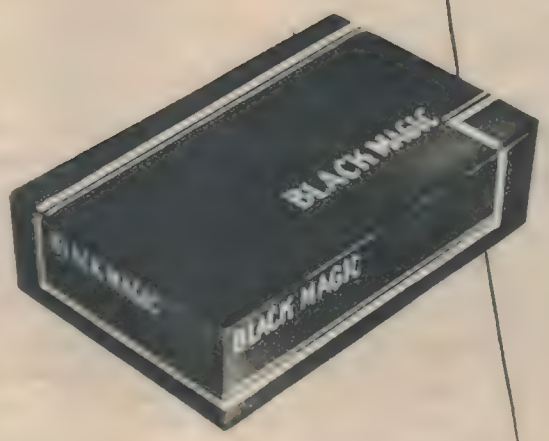

MADE BY ROWNTREES

On the hostel steps, Gummerson and his wife chat with members. Free and easy, he applies one rule rigidly—the hostel shuts at 10 p.m.

Food is plain but plentiful. Breakfast—of porridge, bacon and egg, bread and marmalade—costs 2s. But many members prefer to cook their own meals

Robert Gummerson welcomes the happy wanderers

by DAVID MILLWOOD

By cycle and on foot, they make for his youth hostel. After twenty years as a warden, he knows how to put them at ease. "If my methods clash with rules," he says, "I discard the rule book"

ONE NIGHT LAST JANUARY, a party of eight youth hostellers on a spree in the Yorkshire Dales village of Stainforth returned to the hostel, laughing and singing, at 10.45 p.m., forty-five minutes after the warden had closed and bolted the doors. They pleaded to be let in. Despite the weather—it was a cold and rainy night—Robert Gummerson, the warden, refused. He heard later that they slept in a barn.

The following day, one of the hostellers complained to the regional committee of the Youth Hostels Association, and Gummerson received a letter accusing him of harsh treatment.

"I didn't reply at once," he says, "but thought it over. In a few days I got another letter, from the mother of one of the lads. She thanked me for being firm, and assured me I had done the right thing. I then replied to the committee's letter."

The rule of no admittance after ten o'clock is the only one that Gummerson applies rigidly. When two fellow wardens, both personal friends on a weekend visit, arrived back on the second night at eleven, he refused to open the doors to them.

"They stayed out," he says. "I couldn't let the other hostellers down by making an exception for my friends."

A tall, heavily built Tynesider of sixty-five, Robert Gummerson has been host to more than a hundred thousand walkers and cyclists, and is one of the best-known and most popular youth hostel wardens in the country. He believes that a warden's first duty is to make members feel at home. At Stainforth, a fifteen-room early Victorian mansion which cost the Youth Hostels Association £2,900, he keeps notices to a minimum.

"It means that I may be asked the same question forty times in one busy morning, but it's worth it. Members should feel that the hostel belongs to them, not that they are tolerated by kind permission of the warden."

Unlike Gummerson, some wardens pay more attention to a strict observance of the rules than to creating a friendly atmosphere. One ex-army officer insists that blankets are folded the army way and that pots and pans are scrubbed till they shine; another warden imposes on-the-spot fines for offenders; and there is a caretaker-warden, living away from the hostel, who locks male members in their dormitory at night and lets them out in the morning.

"Apparently he is more concerned with their morals than their safety in a fire," says Gummerson, who admits that he worried about moral standards himself in his early days as a warden. "Today I take it for granted that members behave—and they never let me down."

Open all the year round, Stainforth hostel is busiest on Saturday nights, when Gummerson puts on a show with his dogs, Mij and Punch, two black Labradors that he has taught to count, do sums and play simple games. Nine-year-old Mij is an expert at dominoes. Her method, which television viewers saw on the *Ask Pickles* programme last year, is to tap out the numbers with her paw on her master's hand. A cocky young hosteller who disbelieved stories he had heard about Mij's intelligence volunteered to play her one night. He lost three times running.

With sometimes more than a hundred hungry hostellers to cater for in one weekend, the Gummersons have little time for relaxation. Their net salary as joint wardens is £4 17s. 1d. a week, but food, lighting and accommodation are provided. The only luxuries they allow

JOHN BULL PHOTOGRAPHS BY LAWRENCE HANLEY

Working parties keep down hostel costs. Gummerson supervises a group sawing winter logs. At other hostels volunteers help to tend pigs, sheep and hens

With his wife, Gummerson watches a dancing display. When he gave a challenge at table tennis, he was beaten—by a world champion

themselves are tobacco, an occasional glass of beer and a regular Saturday treat which Gummerson buys for his wife—two pigs' feet and half a pound of sugared almonds.

The food they provide is plain but plentiful. A typical breakfast of porridge or cereal, fried egg, bacon and baked beans, bread and butter and marmalade, costs 2s.; a packed sandwich lunch costs 1s.; an evening meal of soup, meat and two vegetables, baked pudding and "as much tea as they can drink," 2s. 3d. With 2s. for a bed (1s. 6d. from October to April), a twenty-four hour stay costs a hosteller 7s. 3d. Hardier members do their own cooking in a separate kitchen (charge: 2d. a night).

Although some Continental hostels have communal dormitories, in Britain there are always separate rooms for men and women. If more men arrive than women, or vice versa, the Gummersons convert the rooms accordingly. They did this one weekend with alarming consequences for one young man, who woke up to find he was in a girls' dormitory. He covered his head with bedclothes and waited until all the girls had gone to breakfast. Then he jumped out of bed, grabbed his clothes and ran for the bathroom.

"The girls were never told there was a man in their room that night," says Mrs. Gummerson. "The embarrassed lad explained what had happened, but it was obviously a genuine mistake—he had occupied the same bed in the same room the night before."

Joins In Hostel Revelry

Among the six thousand visitors that Gummerson is expecting at Stainforth this year are two veteran hostellers, Ralph Bradley, a London magazine artist, and George Ellis, a geologist at the Natural History Museum. They have been annual visitors since 1935, the year Gummerson opened his first hostel. He was forty-five, and had tried a succession of white-collar jobs—railway clerk, travelling salesman and compiler of shorthand books. The hostel, nine miles from the shops at Kendal, in the Lake District, and six miles from the nearest pub, was one of the first "house" hostels that replaced the converted sheds and barns used in the early days of the movement.

Although hostellers are expected to make their own entertainment, a warden often helps out. Gummerson started weekend sing-songs, dances and table-tennis tournaments.

"I became so practised at table tennis," he says, "that I challenged the winner myself, forfeiting my breakfast egg if I was beaten. I remember the trouble I had coaxing one shy, quiet young man to enter the tournament, and my surprise when, by a narrow margin, he won it. What I had failed to realize was that he had been holding himself in check. He trounced me without losing a single point. I discovered afterwards that I had lost my breakfast egg to Richard Bergmann, the world champion."

Cut Off By Snow For Weeks

Famous people who take to hostelling—like Hugh Dalton, Dr. G. M. Trevelyan, George Band, of the Everest team, and the late Dr. C. E. M. Joad—do not expect or receive special treatment. Equal rights and duties of membership was one of the principles on which the youth hostels movement was founded. Today there are three hundred hostels and more than 180,000 members.

In the severe winter of 1947, at Bishopdale hostel in the West Riding, the Gummersons were snowed up for twelve weeks. Farmers used the outbuildings as shelters for their sheep, and Gummerson stripped ivy from the house walls to feed the starving animals.

The following year, he decided to make the hostel self-supporting, and bought sheep, pigs, goats, geese, hens and a calf. Working parties of volunteer hostellers cultivated the gardens, sowed vegetables, planted fruit bushes—and returned later in the year to pick and eat the crops they had helped to grow.

Many hostels, including Stainforth, welcome school parties. The school for deaf children, at Odsal, Bradford, sends a party every year. On the first night of their visit last year, Mrs. Gummerson went up to their dormitory, expecting to find them asleep. She opened the door and took a peep inside. Although the room was perfectly silent, here and there she saw lights popping on and off.

"In a moment, I understood what was going on. Some of the children were holding torches under their chins and shining the light on to their lips. The others were lip-reading. I didn't have the heart to tell them to go to sleep."

In contrast to school parties are the Autumn Tints, a group of hardy Lancashire and Yorkshire cyclists, all over seventy, who average fifty miles in a weekend whatever the weather. Like most members, they joined the Y.H.A. for two main reasons—love of the open air, and the free-and-easy comradeship of youth hostel life.

With people from all walks of life—university professors and coal miners, high-ranking civil servants and motor mechanics—mixing freely and informally, eating at the same table, sleeping in the same dormitories and sharing the same chores, a warden must have tact.

"I've known Robert Gummerson faced with some awkward situations," says Fred Rawnsley, chairman of the West Riding group of the Y.H.A., "but I've never seen him get ruffled or hurt anyone's feelings. One night, a young fellow who had had too much to drink in the local was being a nuisance. Quietly, Gummerson took him aside and told him to pack his rucksack and go. The other hostellers didn't even know the incident had occurred."

Pepper Solved A Problem

A warden has the right to hold a hosteller's membership card for a breach of the rules—and automatically bar him from any other hostel until the complaint against him has been investigated—but Gummerson has never done so during twenty years at the job. "I prefer to deal with trouble my own way, but I rarely have to. Hostellers are very well-behaved, considerate folk."

Each warden develops his own methods of running a hostel. Gummerson's way is to combine his own judgment with what the rule-book tells him—"and if the two clash, I discard the rule-book."

There was nothing in the rules to tell him what to do with 130 bottles of lemonade that he discovered in the pantry when he took over his present hostel at Stainforth. The problem remained with him for days. Space was scarce and he didn't want to write them off.

"Finally," he says, "I had a bright idea. When I made the soup that night I put in double the amount of salt and pepper. No one complained about the soup, but by ten o'clock I had sold every bottle of lemonade." THE END

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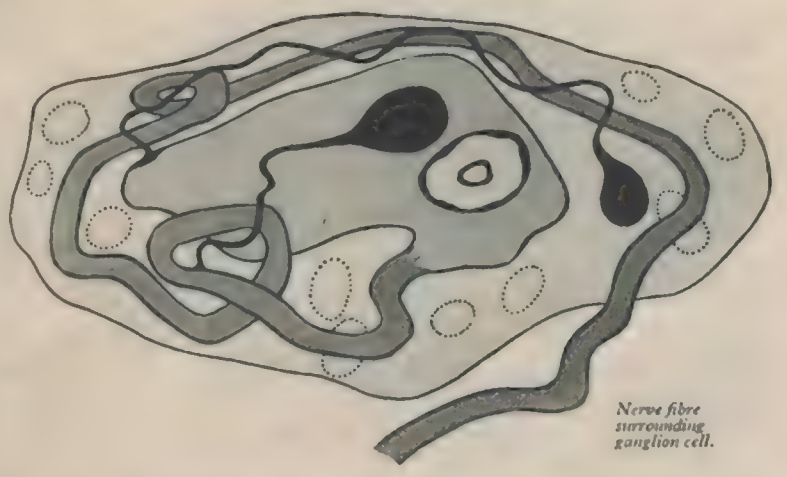
can make you irritable



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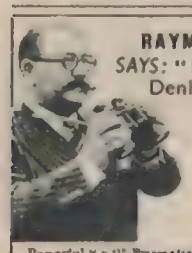

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ADRIATIC CROSSING

Continued from page 19

comes, it will find the gold and these three crooks. They won't bother about us then. Even if they do we shall be in the clear."

"That gold represents wealth taken from my father and many other people," she said. "Do you think the Albanian Government is entitled to it?"

"I don't know," George said wearily. "And right now I don't care. Sandro—get down to the Doria and put those boxes ashore." George handed him the sparking plugs he had taken from Orba. "And fix these."

Jane made as if to speak again. He put his hand on her shoulder. "Get down to the Doria and be a good girl."

He went past her to meet Marani, who was staggering up the quay. He was swaying about all over the place and obviously didn't know what had happened. George jabbed Orba's automatic into his side and said: "Keep on walking."

He took him up to the house and in a little while they had the three of them in the bedroom. The head man brought out a bottle of *rakia* and insisted that George had a couple of glasses with him. He drank, itching with impatience to be away. If the cutter caught up with them, there would be endless complications.

As he drank, Doctor Veti, still gagged, glared at him viciously. George jerked the gag from his mouth and said: "There's a cutter due here. I'm leaving you and the gold."

Doctor Veti said: "They'll murder us."

George said curtly: "Why not?"

Doctor Veti tried to find a way out. "Take us with you and you can have the gold."

"It stays—with you." He wasn't sorry for him.

The head man and his friends wanted George to have another glass of *rakia*. He refused and, accompanied by some of them, went down to the Doria. Sandro had the plugs in place and he and Jane were just heaving the last bullion case up on to the quay.

"Tell them it's their government's gold and they must hand it over to the captain of the cutter," George said to her.

He heard her talking to them as he fiddled with the engine. The engine started first time, and the note now was firm and healthy.

As Sandro cast off, he said: "Is pity to leave gold. Maybe the signorina could take just a little?"

George didn't answer. He was in a hurry to get away. He put the wheel over and edged the Doria out from the quay. He saw Jane's eyes on him, and he grinned. She would get over her irritation about the gold.

By the time the Doria was turning the northerly point of the island and heading out to sea, darkness was gathering over the water. On the mainland a few lights were beginning to prick through the gloom.

George worked out the course on the chart. Avoiding the minefields and also the patrol lanes, it would be a couple of hours before they were clear out to sea and able to make a dead run for Termoli. If nothing happened in the next two or three hours, then they would be safe.

He sent Sandro up in the bows to keep watch and Jane sat by him watching the dark spread of water astern. She wasn't saying much. She just sat there with her lips set tightly. He put a hand on her arm and said: "Cheer up. At least we're coming back with our skins in one piece. That was more than I expected."

An hour went by and, as they plugged through the darkness, each minute that passed made George feel easier. The wind was getting up a bit and there was a long swell running. Now and again a quick flurry of rain swept down on the wind. Up in the bows Sandro was singing to himself quietly.

Suddenly Jane called: "Look!"

But George had seen it as soon as she. Away behind them a hard beam of light had broken out and was sweeping in quick arcs across the water.

"It's the cutter," he said. He saw her face for a moment in the glare of the far light and there was a look of apprehension on it that moved him. "Don't worry," he went on; "even if they catch us up, it'll only be awkward, not desperate. They've got the men they want."

She didn't say anything, but Sandro, clattering back from the bows, said: "Is the cutter. Pretty bad for us, signore."

George looked back. The cutter was about two miles astern, and not quite on their course. The light was sweeping regularly but so far it had come nowhere near them. He put the wheel over and changed course well away from the cutter. Suddenly the light went out.

"Do you think they'll find us?" Jane's voice was quiet but there was anxiety in it.

"Not if I can help it."

He opened up the engine more and they bore away into the darkness. For fifteen minutes there was no sign of any other life around them. He began to think they had shaken the cutter off. Another fifteen minutes, he decided, and then he would come back on to course again.

He never got the chance. Away on the port bow, the searchlight suddenly stabbed through the darkness again. It swept round slowly, silvering the ridges of the long swells and then was full on the Doria. For a moment they were blinded by it. Then it passed. But in two seconds it was back again and this time it held.

The cutter was almost half a mile away. George knew she would never lose them now. He kept the Doria going, hoping the cutter might mistake it for some fishing craft. But she began to bear down on them.

Exposed to the glare of the light he felt naked and unprotected. A rain squall swept over them and it was a thick, silvery lace curtain in the strong light. Then from the darkness there was a low boom. A shell sent up a flurry of white water a hundred yards ahead of the bows.

George said: "We've got to let them come alongside. If we don't stop, they'll blow us right out of the water."

"But we can't do that!" Jane was suddenly on her feet. "We can't do that. We've got to get away from them!" She sounded almost desperate.

George said: "They can't do anything to us. If we're polite, they may even let us go."

Another shot sent the water spouting ahead; and this time it was closer to the Doria. George felt the girl clutch at him. Her face, close to his, was white and stricken. "We must get away!" she shouted. "We must! You don't understand!"

He saw her glance at Sandro. He was standing forward, scratching his head, and for once the grin had almost gone from his face. "Is right, Signor Parsons," he said.

George caught her by the shoulder. "What is all this?" he asked sharply.

"We didn't leave the gold on the island," Jane said. "While you were up at the house, Sandro and I took it out of the boxes and put ballast in its place."

"You mean it's on board?" He couldn't believe it. How could she have been so stupid?

She nodded, frightened, and for a few seconds he couldn't speak. Then the thought of the danger she'd put them in swept over him. "You stupid woman!" he shouted angrily. "Don't you see what you've done? They've caught us stealing it. We're in the same boat as those others now!"

He was thinking that the cutter would pick them up and take them to Albania. There wouldn't be any diplomatic finesse about it. There wouldn't be any way out.

"I'm sorry," she said in a very small, shaken voice.

George waved her away. The cutter

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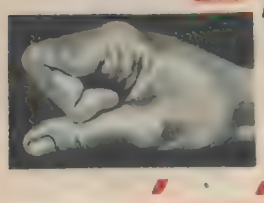

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was closing on them. "If anyone deserved ten years in an Albanian jail, you do. But I'm damned if I want that. Sandro—get me that rifle."

He shoved her behind the wheel, opened the throttle wide and shouted: "Keep her going like that, and if they begin to shoot, get your head right down."

"Yes," Jane said.

The cutter fired another shot and the spray came aboard. George ran forward and grabbed the rifle from Sandro. He flung himself down behind the cabin top and rested the rifle there. The Doria was swinging up and down and he knew it would be a miracle if he made it the first shot.

The cutter was about two hundred yards away on the port bow. He couldn't see her. All he could see was the great eye of the searchlight. He sighted at the heart of the glare, got the first pressure on the trigger and then held it as the light rose and fell. As it came slowly down into his sights he fired. But the light was still there. He fired again and the light was still there, glaring, and this time, in response, an angry chattering came echoing across the water. A curved skirting of spray went up two yards from the Doria's side.

"Keep down," he yelled to Jane and Sandro. There was another burst of fire, the thud of bullets against the port side and a quick dance of angry wood chips that flickered in the harsh light. The light came sinking down into his sights again and he fired. The light went out. The sudden blackness was like a blow in the face. Away in the distance, men were shouting.

George stood up, fogged by the darkness for a moment, then raced back to the wheel. He pushed Jane aside and cut the engine dead. "Get down and stay down." He had a hand on her shoulder and pressed her to the boards.

Sandro dropped beside them just as the machine-gun opened up again. The shots whistled astern of the Doria. A few seconds later another burst ripped through the darkness. This time they were forward of the boat. A blinding squall of rain swung over them and George heard the thud of the cutter's screws somewhere close and prayed that she would do what he hoped. She would think they were running for it, racing away into the darkness and she would make a guess at their course and follow.

For ten minutes they lay there, listening to the sound of the cutter's screws and the noise, now distant, now close, of men shouting. George prayed that the cutter hadn't got another searchlight she could rig.

He lay there with one arm over Jane's shoulders. Though he couldn't see her in the darkness, he felt her shoulders tremble a little. He didn't do anything. He didn't say anything. If she was scared, she had only herself to blame.

But then he remembered how he had first seen her, pyjamas flapping, her eyes fogged with sleep, brown hair tousled by the wind, and somehow the memory made him smile. He slipped his arm round her shoulders, gently now, and held her. He wasn't even angry with her any longer. "Cheer up," he whispered. "It'll be all right, I think." Then, almost before he knew he had done it, he lowered his head and kissed her on the cheek.

"You should be angry. I should be beaten," she said.

He grinned in the darkness. "Maybe we'll get around to that one day."

They lay there in silence. Gradually the sound of the cutter's screws faded, and the bursts of machine-gun fire became less frequent. Then finally there was no sound at all except the slap of the waves against the Doria's sides as she rose and fell.

It was a long time before George felt it was safe to move. When he did, he kept the motor down so that the noise was at a minimum as they headed away. Every half hour he cut the motor and lay to, listening for the sound of the cutter.

THEY made Termoli just before noon the following day. As they came alongside, Jane said: "What are you going to do about the gold?"

George looked at her. Her hair was damp and matted with salt spray, her blouse filthy and streaked with tar and oil, and her skirt was torn down one side where she had caught it on something in the night.

He said: "It's being handed over to the police and I'm telling them the full story. Believe me, it will start as fine a diplomatic mix-up as any civil servant could wish for. And what's going to happen to it is anyone's guess."

She nodded.

"And then I'm off to Rome."

Jane said nothing. She looked at him, tall, sunburnt and unshaven. She knew the doctors in Rome would give him no trouble, and suddenly she knew that her walking tour was over. She would be in Rome, too. . . .

Up forward Sandro began to sing happily.

THE END

THE LITTLE WALLS

Continued from page 13

door, neither in the room nor out. She'd been a handsome woman, but her looks had grown scrawny and angular. I said I didn't want to disturb her if she was busy and she coughed behind her hand.

"Forgive me, Mr.—er—Turner, but I do hope you're not going to ask my son to take something else on. He really hasn't been well, and he'll never learn to let up. He drives himself."

"No," I said. "I came only to make some inquiries."

Her handsome, dark eyes travelled over me. She still looked anxious. "I'm sorry. I know I shouldn't have said that. But it's years since Colonel Powell sent, and the last time. . . ."

I said: "I'm not one of Colonel Powell's staff."

SHE left me then, but I'd only time to move to the window before a small car came along the road to the bungalow and swung round into the garage at the back. The door of the house opened and shut and after that there was a murmur of voices. On a table by the window was a letter addressed to Commander Martin Coxon, D.S.O., M.A., and a pretty good and businesslike sketch of a racing yacht with all dimensions marked. Beside these was a tin of El Toro cigars and a copy of *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*.

The door of the room opened and a man came in. "Mr. Turner? I'm Coxon."

"Colonel Powell gave me your name. He said he thought you might be able to help me."

"Powell? Well, it's a long time since I heard from him. What does he want?"

I told him. He was a handsome-looking chap of medium height. For the lean strong lines of his body, his face had a delicate look because of its pallor under the thick, dark hair, and also perhaps because of its expression, which was sensitive and introspective and mobile.

There wasn't much of the seaman about him in spite of his clothes, which were a sort of freehand adaptation of the old navy battledress carried into civilian life. And with it went a very fine tooled leather belt with a broad silver buckle. While I was explaining, he offered me a cigarette and sat on the window seat, tapping his own cigarette sharply on the side of his case but not lighting it.

When it was finished he said: "I remember reading something about your brother's death in the paper . . . but I haven't even seen Buckingham since 1948. How does Powell suppose I can help you?"

I said: "You can tell me all you know about Jack Buckingham. I'm going to Holland tomorrow and I want all the information I can get."

"I'll give you what I can, of course; but it's precious little. And why the

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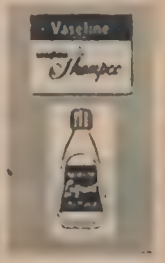

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Consider your verdict

by

RUSSELL SCOTT, LL.B.

MRS. GREEN and Miss Brown were on their way to buy groceries at the local shopping centre. The neighbourhood where they lived was on the outskirts of the city, and some of the roads were in a bad state of repair; the surfaces were broken and there were many potholes.

Crossing a road, Mrs. Green stepped into a three-inch deep hole that was partly hidden by the muddy water which filled it; it had been caused by the wearing of the tar surface.

Mrs. Green broke her ankle; Miss Brown turned to help her friend and tripped over another hole caused by the local council's failure to fill properly a trench they had dug for laying pipes. There was a considerable depression in the normal level of the road, and Miss Brown was injured.

Both women sued the council for negligence and non-repair of the road.

"The council has no right to make up a road and then let it fall into such a dangerous state of disrepair," Mrs. Green told the judge. "They have obligations which they must observe."

"I agree," added Miss Brown. "The road was already in a shocking state, and the council made it worse by not filling in the trench properly."

In defence, the council's representative pointed out that the district was a large one and the running expenses were heavy. "There isn't the money to repair all the roads at once," he said. "That particular road will be put right in its turn, but it is not the fault of the council if it cannot be re-surfaced at once.

"The council's resources are limited, and they must refuse to accept liability for Miss Brown's and Mrs. Green's injuries."

What is your verdict? For the legal position, turn to page 38

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emphasis on Buckingham? I should have thought the girl who wrote the letter would be able to tell you more."

"She might if we could find her, but we don't even know her surname. And I've a feeling that if I trace Buckingham I shall find the girl, too."

Coxon put the unlighted cigarette between his lips. He had rings under his eyes; yet there was far too much vitality in him for real illness.

"Have you been in the navy?" he asked.

"Yes. Why?"

"I can usually tell. What were you in?"

"Destroyers. Only two years."

"I was R.N.V.R.," he said. "No right to the rank now, but it clings. What were you, a lieutenant?"

"Eventually. By painful stages."

He finally lit his cigarette. "One can hardly believe it was so long ago. I'm thirty-nine, though you might not think so. . . . What did you want to know about Buckingham?"

"Anything you can tell me. What does he look like?"

"He's about five foot eight or nine with a short beard and brown eyes, rather narrow; and a strong aquiline nose. Dark hair greying a bit. If you still believe in things like good and bad, then maybe you'd call him a bad man, because he doesn't conform to any recognizable code of ethics. But he's a thoroughly clever fellow, intelligent and subtle, and that's precisely why no one knows much about him. He lives his own life and makes his own terms, and when he does anything on the shady side of the law he's done it and gone long before anyone can touch him."

"Did you like him?"

"Like him? No."

"Why not?"

COXON pushed back his hair with two parted fingers. "For one thing, I prefer my fun a bit cleaner." He got up and fetched a bottle and two glasses. "Tell me more about your brother. What was he doing in Java? How did he actually come to meet Buckingham?"

I told him, and he nodded and listened carefully. While I was speaking I was sizing him up, trying to decide whether to follow up a sudden impulse. At length I decided to risk it.

"You tell me you don't like Jack

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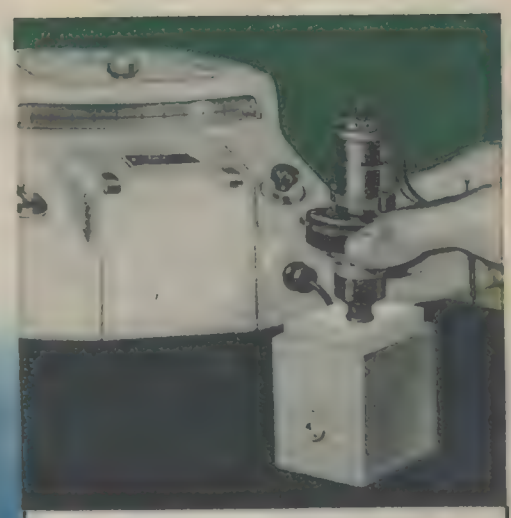

To measure the whiteness of human teeth, a solid block of pure magnesium oxide was used as a standard of whiteness. The spectro-photometer was then set to this standard and the degree of whiteness of the teeth measured on the scale shown above.

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Buckingham. You wouldn't, I suppose, care to help me find him?"

He was pouring whisky into a glass. When he finished, he held it up to the light. "What use would I be to you?"

"You'd at-least know Buckingham if you saw him."

"He's probably hundreds of miles away by now."

"Perhaps. But it's slightly less unhopeful with you than without you."

Martin Coxon hesitated, then he shook his head suddenly, with nervous emphasis. "Sorry, but I can't see it as a reasonable proposition."

"I didn't suppose you would, but I put it to you. Naturally the expenses would have come on me," I said. "I've never been to Amsterdam. Do you know it?"

"Yes, it's a good city. I first saw it when I was eighteen."

He got up and thoughtfully tilted the whisky in his glass. "The last time I was over there I was on a piece of cloak-and-dagger nonsense for Naval Intelligence. I was in Holland for three weeks, mainly in Amsterdam and Rotterdam. . . ."

"All of which would make you of more use to me than you think. But I understand how you feel. Even if you had the time, why should you waste it on a complete stranger?"

He said pleasantly: "It isn't that I mind helping a stranger. But I'm recently home from Ireland and have work to do. And I've a series of three yachting articles to finish. If I go with you for even a week that's twenty guineas down the drain."

"Naturally I could make that up."

"A lot of things seem to come naturally to you." He pushed back his hair with a sharp irritable gesture. "I don't see what you're *driving* at. Supposing you found Buckingham—and this girl. Then what?"

I stared at him. "I knew Grevil, and simply don't believe that he committed suicide."

He was a long time before speaking. "Ye-es. I see some point in that. But there are only two alternatives, aren't there? Could he swim?"

"Very well."

Coxon said: "Then you think he was murdered."

I said: "I want to find out."

He thought about that for a moment and I could tell that he was tempted. "When are you going?"

"I'm taking the three o'clock plane to Schiphol tomorrow. Will you phone me if you change your mind?"

That evening he phoned to say he would come.

WHILE we were over the North Sea, Coxon told me more about Buckingham. I began to build up a picture of an active, ruthless man who was ready to risk anything for the whim of the moment. I got the impression, too, that perhaps Coxon had some old score to pay off that he wasn't telling me about, because there was more in his voice today when he spoke of Buckingham. Perhaps that was behind his decision to come.

Then he asked me about my family and myself, and I told him about my job with British Turbo-Jets and my ambition to paint and my failure to make the grade and——

"Are you married?" he asked abruptly.

"No. I was engaged a couple of years ago, but it came to nothing." Not easy to explain about Pamela and the way things had gone adrift. Anyway, I didn't want to.

"What about you?" I said to him.

"Me?" He shook his head. "The German word for marriage, *ehe*, sums the thing up: two vowels united in a sigh of boredom. As for the rest, well, I had a good many years before the war that you didn't have; and I suppose I made the most of them. *Wehr nicht liebt Wein, Weib und Gesang. . . .*"

Nine thousand feet below, through a thin reef of mackerel cloud, the coast of Holland was coming into view.

Coxon said after a while: "What do you propose to do when we get there?"

"I shall see Tholen first. Then if he——"

"That's the man in charge of the case, is it? Does he know you're coming?"

"No. I've got a letter of introduction."

"You'd do far better to give it to the seagulls. It's obvious the police have already made up their minds in this case. If you go to them you'll get *their* facts presented in *their* way, and nothing more. The Officer of Justice—or whatever he's called over there—has made his findings, and the thing's fixed so far as they are concerned. If you go along and start making the motions of unfixing it, you'll find someone blocking your approaches. I know how their minds work."

I thought of Powell's attempt to put me off. "I'm open to suggestions."

He pushed back his black hair with that inverted victory sign of his. "Not easy, I know. But I've one or two contacts dating from my last visit. I suggest we stay with a man called Boets, if he's still there. He keeps a little place off the Heerengracht. During the war he ran part of the Underground. He knows everything and everyone."

"The first thing I want to do is trace Hermina Maas. I want to talk to her about what she says she saw."

"Boets should be able to fix that."

We were losing height now and the plane lurched disconcertingly as we hit the first cloud.

CHRISTIAN BOETS fanned himself with a menu card and said: "There will be no difficulty over that, please. It is in the newspapers of two weeks since, an account. I know a man who keeps the back papers. My son will get them. But for the rest, if the police fail. . . . I am out of touch. For years now I keep this hotel, nothing more."

"I'll write the names down for you," said Martin Coxon, tapping his fingers on the table. "Jack Buckingham. And Leonie. Just Leonie. I see it's hard and we shall have to pay."

"Some things you cannot buy, for no one has them to sell." Boets eased his great tight stomach against the table. "I will do what I can, please, but that is very small. You have others also who would help?"

"No one except the police," I said.

Boets winced and Martin said sharply: "Of course there are others I can try, but I'm relying chiefly on you, Boets."

When he had waddled out, Martin said: "He's always like this; pay no attention. It's his way of putting up the price."

A few minutes later, Boets came in with a dozen crumpled copies of the *Handelsblad* and read the account to us. There appeared to have been no formal inquest on the lines usual in England. Hermina Maas of Zolenstraat 12, had reported to the police that——

"Zolenstraat," I said. "Where is that?"

Boets blew out a breath and his eyes closed as if the fat had squeezed them from below. "It is near the Oude Kerk in the district of the docks, perhaps a kilometre from here. It is a part of not good repute, known locally as De Walletjes. As you will turn over a bridge, Zolenstraat is upon——"

"De Walletjes," said Martin. "H'm. That's not at all a dainty

Consider your verdict

IN the case on page 36, the judge said that the council was not liable if an injury caused by an unrepaired road could be said to have arisen through natural decay and erosion in the road. However, if a council does some work on a road, neglects to complete the job properly, and this negligence causes an injury, then the council is liable. Miss Brown had been injured in just this way, and she won her case. Mrs. Green lost her case because she broke her ankle in a hole that had been caused by natural erosion in the road.

"Thank heaven you could come . . . ."

neighbourhood, Philip. Would your brother go there of his own accord?"

I looked at the newspaper. Would Grevil go there of his own accord? "No," I said. "You could find your way again?"

"I shouldn't think so. It's years. . . . But Boets can brief us."

"I will tell you," said Boets. "But I do not wish to go with you."

"We'd better try this evening," I said, "as soon as it goes dark."

* * *

Martin Coxon snipped the end off his cigar and flipped it over the edge of the bridge into the canal. His lighter showed up the long barrel of the cigar and his pale, thoughtful, disillusioned face. Then a cloud of blue smoke drifted before him in the gentle breeze. We had left the shopping streets behind—though not very far behind—and now we were walking beside a canal lined with chestnut trees. It was quiet enough, and behind the gables, roofs and towers broke the edge of the evening sky.

As we came round a corner, light flooded from a cheap café with a striped awning, wrinkled across cobbles and fell on the face of the dark quay. Martin stopped and asked the way.

"De Walletjes," I said. "I wonder what it means."

"The Little Walls, according to Boets. It's not an official name, but it's a typical expression of the town. I don't know what the significance is—if there's any at all."

Now we were coming into the oldest part of the town. Narrow canals were bordered by sloping cobbled quays overhung by derricks, with twisted alleys leading off between crooked gabled houses like London before the Great Fire. At a street corner a crowd of young men argued in loud voices over some pigeons in cages.

"We're not far away now," Martin muttered.

In two or three minutes we turned out suddenly upon a wider canal with a quay on either bank. Tall houses flanked the canal. Most of them had flimsy, tattered curtains, and only here and there a blind was down, showing the light. In the distance someone was playing a mandolin.

"This is it," Martin said gently.

As you walked along the uneven cobbled street you could see into the rooms. Most of them were little bed-sitting-rooms with shaded lamps and a few cheap mirrors and cushions.

The lights glimmered on the dark water, reflecting only innocence.

"Maybe they're moral walls," Martin said.

I said: "Now I see the place, I can make sense of it less than ever."

He looked at me. "It's always hard, however well you know a man, to measure up his impulses. If he did do this thing, perhaps it was because some of *his* defences went down. You know that thing from Horace: 'This be our wall of metal, to be in nowise conscious of guilt and to turn white at no fault laid to our charge.' Who knows what goes wrong with a man in the dark hours of the night?"

I stared at his shadowed face and wondered if at some time in the past something the sort of thing he pictured had happened to him.

We crossed the bridge to the other side, and I walked over to the corner house, whose windows were lighted, both overlooking the water and the narrow alley continuing the road from the bridge. On the brick wall "Zolenstraat" was painted in black.

So Hermina Maas was not far away. If this was the corner from which she had seen Grevil—if she *had* seen him—then near this bridge somewhere he had met his death. I went back to the corner of the bridge and looked down into the water. All along, the canal glimmered with the reflected lights from both sides of the stream. We might have been east of Suez. Perhaps the long Dutch tie-up with the Far East had first brought this district in this way to their land.

Behind me I could hear Coxon questioning someone. Presently he joined me. "Apparently she lives in that house across the street—on the first floor. Let's go."

"I'll try alone first."

"I shouldn't. Safety in numbers."

"I want to try. Sometimes these things come off better alone." I looked at him. "You don't mind being left?"

"Oh, God, no. I was only trying to help. But if you want it that way I'll sit on the bridge and keep watch."

"Yes," I said. "Keep watch."

She was dark, with a streak of hair dyed blonde like a caste mark, and big ear-rings that clinked. For her type, she wasn't bad looking. She was wearing a shabby dark red kimono, stockings that didn't match and tarnished gold slippers.

I said: "Do you speak English?"

"O.K. Sure. I speak English fine."

I said: "Are you Hermina Maas?"

She looked at me a bit more narrowly. "Come inside," she said.

The room was like a decorated cell, with pink art-silk hangings round the bed. A cheval-glass cracked at one corner reflected the springs that were sticking out of the bottom of the red plush couch, and on the dressing-table were a few bits of bric-à-brac. In a saucer were about a dozen cigarette butts, stained pink, and there were three empty Pilsener bottles. A single-bar electric fire grinned beside the mirror, and on the wall above was a calendar with a snowy picture of a girl skating and the words: *Vroolijk Kerstfeest*. Somebody had drawn in a moustache.

I offered her a cigarette and held my lighter for her. As the light flickered over the mascaraed lids and the plucked eyebrows I said: "My name's Philip Turner."

She lifted her head. "Turner?"

"Yes. It was my brother who was drowned in your canal."

Her face became sullen. She said: "That's over and finished, see? You

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WHO'S WHO?

They look alike, but their lives have been very different. From the jumbled details below, can you provide each man with his potted biography — and his name? The answers are on page 42.

BORN:
- A. Fifty-four years ago in Edinburgh, the son of a tailor and clothier.
- B. Forty-nine years ago in Ulster, the son of a titled landowner.

FIRST JOB:
- C. Teaching in an elementary school.
- D. Labouring on a farm.

HAS SAID:
- E. "We have not always lived up to our philosophy. What human being ever has? But the vision is there—our conviction that all men are equal and intended to be brothers, whether their skin be white, black, yellow or brown."
- F. "Great writers, poets, thinkers and philosophers of all ages have laboured magnificently to make words ring for honesty and truth. But how few have listened!"

FAMOUS AS:
- G. A humorous, villainous and theatrical rector.
- H. A political and religious convert.

---

go to the police. Maybe they tell you something. Not me."

"I don't want you to tell me anything. I came to thank you."

"What is it you say?"

I sat on the stronger end of the couch. "You did your best to save him, didn't you? Not everyone would have done that."

She shifted a bit, drew in smoke greedily, didn't speak.

I took out a hundred guilder note. "Perhaps you'll accept this, with my gratitude for what you did."

She watched me put the note on the dressing-table. She watched it very closely as if she expected it to move and then she looked at me again. "What else is it that you want?"

"Nothing."

"Then why do you give me this?"

"I've told you."

She stared at me. "I did not see your brother real close. He was out by the bridge. But he was much older than you, isn't it? And thinner. Not so strong, I guess."

I said: "We have not been able to trace the other people who were with him."

She flipped off the heel of her slipper and tapped ash into it. "What other people?"

"The man and the girl."

"I saw no girl."

"She may not have come this far. But the man was with him surely."

She said: "Look, mister, I tell the police all I know. See? For nine hours they ask me questions, this way and that, all because I try to save a man's life. I wish to have never set eyes on your brother. I wish to have kept my big mouth shut. I am sorry for you but I cannot help you now."

"I'm not going near the police," I said. "It's the last thing I want to do. I want to settle this in my own time and my own way."

"So."

"And now that I have seen you I want next to see the man who was with my brother when he died. The man with the little beard, I mean."

She said: "I thought you came for nothing. I thought you give me a hundred guilders for nothing."

"So I have. Don't tell me anything that you don't want to."

She smoked for a minute or so. Then she pushed back a sleeve to scratch her elbow. "If you think it is only the police I have to be afraid of, then you are not born yet."

It was quiet round about. The whole house seemed suddenly very quiet. She said: "I am not old—I mean I am new—round here. Two, three months, that is all. Soon, when it is safe, I shall go back to Utrecht. But yet it is not good to go too soon and so I stay. And so I keep my mouth shut for it is safer that way."

"All right," I said. "We'll leave it. I'm sorry."

"It is bad, this part. I did not know that this is a bad district, To me when I came it is like any other. I did not know until your brother dies. Then, when I run out and call the police, they tell me they will spoil my face."

"Who are they?"

Upstairs a door banged and then a window screeched on its cords. She listened. A nerve in her cheek twitched twice.

"That night your brother I first see standing by the bridge at an hour before midnight. It is a good moon that night but low and there are shadows. He has just come, I think, for he strikes a match to light a cigarette and twice the match goes out before he can light it. He stands smoking and throwing away cigarettes and then smoking again. He walked across the bridge and back many times."

"What is he like?" I said.

"Your brother? High and thin and broad, long shoulders and the little stoop of the neck, so."

She bent her head forward in an attitude so exactly right that I nodded, instantly satisfied. "Yes. Go on."

She picked up the hundred guilder note, stared at it, folded it twice, tucked it rapidly into her stocking.

"It is not safe for you to be here," she said. "If they knew. . . . It is not safe for me."

I said: "That money will pay your fare to Utrecht. Once you're out of this district no one can touch you."

"No? I am not so sure. Thirty kilometres is not enough."

"You were saying about my brother. . . ."

She shrugged. "After he had been there some time the man came out of here. He was to walk away, but your brother stops him."

"What is he like, this man?"

"How do I know? Less high than your brother, and a small beard like you say. I do not see him come in here but I seen him once before on the night before. They stop and speak. Soon it is an argument. . . ."

From where I was sitting the pier glass reflected the door. As I glanced in the glass, I saw the door shift. It moved so slowly I thought it was just a flaw in the mirror. Then I saw Hermina Maas's face and knew it wasn't. I looked again. A man was standing outside the door.

"Another cigarette?" I said.

"O.K. Thanks." She took the cigarette out of my packet. Her nail varnish was chipped. Her hand wasn't steady now.

I said casually: "A friend of mine said there was nowhere like De Walletjes. He's been here often."

Her eyes met mine. "So?"

"Yes. He used to put in to Amsterdam regularly. About once every three months when his ship docked. Perhaps I'll come again. That's if you'd like me to."

"Sure," she said. "Sure. Come any time."

The door opened and the man came in.

To be continued next week

"The Little Walls" by Winston Graham will be published by Hodder & Stoughton on June 23 at 12s. 6d.

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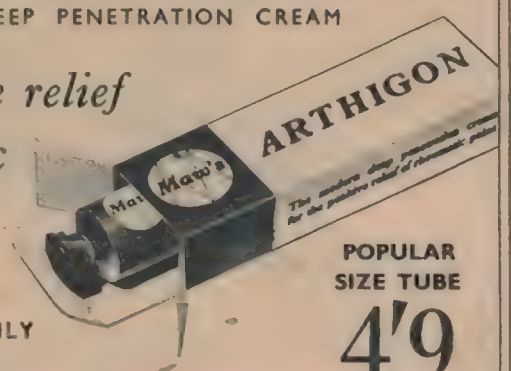

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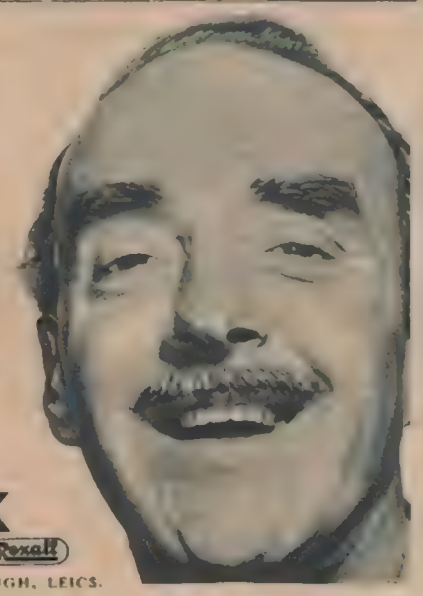

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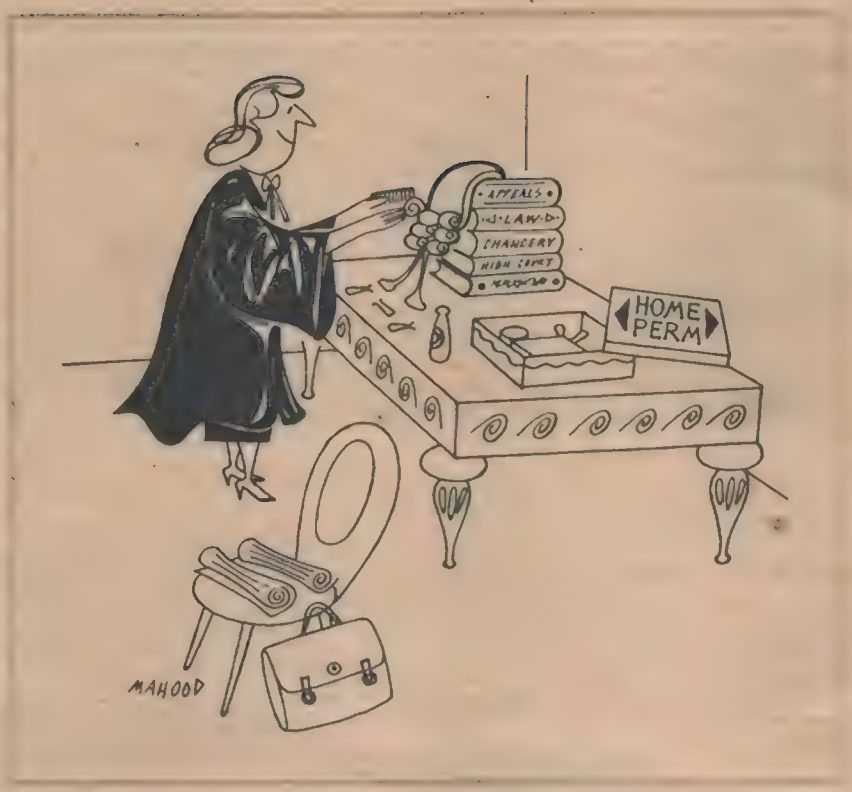

HIGH ADVENTURE

Continued from page 23

that snowbridges the full thickness of the ice-axe shaft would collapse and let you through. It was the most dangerous and nerve-racking snow condition I had ever struck. It was now snowing and the visibility shrank as the clouds writhed round us. We had had more than enough and in desperation we decided to camp. We found a little snowy knoll and tested every inch of it with our ice-axes. Then we pitched our tent and crawled inside. We were a thoroughly demoralized party.

We couldn't understand why the snow had become so soft at over 19,500 feet. The only answer could be the warm monsoon air, and we didn't like the thought of having to weather a monsoon storm in this unsavoury position. I decided to go back with the Sherpas and bring up the rest of the stores that we had dumped the previous day. Then we would be able to stand a long period of bad weather.

The Sherpas were understandably reluctant to start again, but a hot drink put new life into them. George stayed behind to prepare some food and to guide us back through the mist. I started off with the Sherpas spread out behind me on the rope. I had hoped that we had found all the concealed crevasses on our way over, but I was wrong. I hadn't gone fifty feet before I was up to my waist in a new one. By the time I reached the first of the great crevasses I had had a harrowing time. We climbed down into it and then out again and picked up our loads. Then we started back.

Trapped In Crevasse

I was rather suspicious of the snow in the bottom of the crevasse and made the others stay well behind on the steep wall while I investigated it. It seemed all right and I stepped carefully forward. Next moment there was a dull whoomp, and the snow I was on sank rapidly beneath me into a crevasse. And down I went!

I didn't have much time to think but I knew the Sherpas couldn't be relied on for any quick action with the rope. I would have to save myself! I threw my legs out and my crampons bit into the ice on the far wall and, with a jar, my shoulders jammed against the other one. A few seconds later the rope came tight.

I was in a precarious position. I estimated that I was twelve feet below the crest of the crevasse and felt fairly certain that the Sherpas would be too frightened to come down close enough to pull me out. For a moment I gathered my breath and then, still spanning the crevasse, I shuffled along on my crampons and shoulders until the gap narrowed a little. Mercifully I had held on to my ice-axe and I was able to cut a little ledge in the smooth, vertical wall.

I managed to get one of my feet on to it and then, with a supreme effort that took all my strength, I wriggled myself upright and swung my other leg across the crevasse and jammed the long steel points hard into the opposite wall. Gasping for breath, I chipped out a little step and moved my foot into it. And there I stood, quite comfortably balanced, with a dark void beneath me and my head only six feet from the surface.

Smiling Sherpa Faces

Three feet away was a little snowy ledge attached to the wall of the crevasse. It looked fairly solid, so I worked my way slowly along and levered myself up on to it. Then, balancing with my ice-axe against the other wall of the crevasse, I stood up slowly.

My eyes came above the edge of the crevasse. I saw three frightened figures spreadeagled on the slopes above—Angje was pulling hard at me; Angputa was pulling hard at Angje; and Tashi Phuta, with terror written plainly on his face, was pulling frantically at Angputa. As the top of my head appeared, the three worried faces shed their fears in enormous smiles and Angje shouted another relieved *"Bohut kharab, Sahib!"*

A strong tug on the rope; a mighty kick from me and I was out and none the worse for wear.

We returned to camp with even more care, if that were possible, and were glad to hear George's powerful voice guiding us through the mist. Although his steaming stew did much to soothe frayed nerves, we retired to bed depressed and not a little afraid. The Sherpas intoned their invocations for half the night.

We awoke very early to find it was still misty but very much colder. There was quite a chance that there might be a frost to tie the snow together. We decided to go on with light loads.

We hadn't gone twenty feet from the tent before my foot shot through

WHO'S WHO?

A D F G are the clues on page 41 which help to identify the man on the left as Alastair Sim, the stage and film star. He is a former rector of Edinburgh University.

B C E H are the clues which identify the man on the right as Lord Pakenham. From an aristocratic background, he became a Socialist Minister of Civil Aviation; from being a confirmed Protestant, he has become an ardent Roman Catholic.

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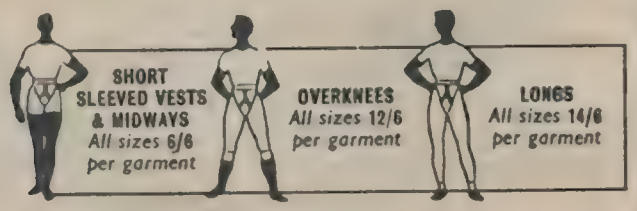

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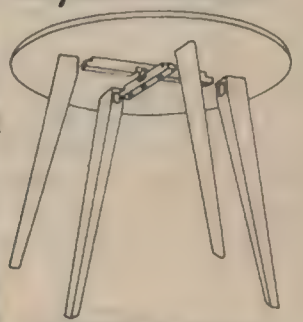

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RECIPE: 1½ oz. (7 rounded tablesp.) Rice Krispies;
½ oz. (1 level tablesp.) Bournville Cocoa;
1 oz. (1 rounded tablesp.) Icing sugar or castor sugar;
2 oz. (1 rounded tablesp.) syrup;
1 oz. Spry vegetable-fat shortening
If liked add: 1 oz. (2 rounded tablesp.) coconut; *or* grated rind 1 small orange

Melt Spry, syrup and sugar in the saucepan and just bring to the boil. Remove from the heat and add the cocoa. Using a metal spoon fold in the Rice Krispies and flavouring as desired. Spoon into 8 to 10 portions either onto a baking sheet or into paper cases. Leave to cool.

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"A very great friend of theirs told me that they are quite awful people"

into a hidden crevasse, and I prepared myself for a continuation of the terrors of the previous day. But the farther we went the harder the surface became and we started to regain our spirits.

As we came over a crest we saw below us a smooth gully running in the direction we wanted to go. We dropped into it and followed it down. With growing excitement, we saw the far side sweep in an almost unbroken, easy slope to the Nup La.

It would have taken a lot to stop us now. We cut our way into the ice valley and out again on the other side. And then we raced up the last slopes.

"We've made it, George!" I cried, and I don't think I've ever felt a greater sensation of achievement.

But great black clouds were boiling up towards us again from Nepal and we hadn't any time to waste. Just short of the pass was a large, flat-topped boulder and we decided to camp on it. We dumped our light loads and raced back over the winding, twisting route. In an hour we were back at the old camp.

We packed everything into enormous loads and then, groaning under the effort, started again for the Nup La. Snow was falling steadily and we were enveloped in fog. It was a great relief to climb up to the boulder and tie our tent down to its solid rock.

Ghostly Ruined Camp

Our first objective—the reaching of the Nup La—was now attained. Our next aim was to see the northern slopes of Everest. We set off next morning and the following day we turned the corner into the East Rongbuk valley—the old pathway to Everest.

On the far side of the valley we could see a few stone walls, rapidly falling into disrepair. We crossed over and examined them. This was Camp One. It gave me an eerie feeling to look at it, as though the ghosts of Mallory and Irvine and Smythe were still flitting among the ruins.

We continued up the East Rongbuk glacier and camped at about 18,500 feet, beside a clear glacial pool—the only oasis we could find in this sad and gloomy valley.

But when we turned the corner next morning the old thrill returned. There was Everest, proud and aloof against a wind-streaked sky. And the East Rongbuk glacier was a shining pathway of clear blue ice sweeping up to the foot of the mountain.

At 10 a.m. we branched off up the small Changtse glacier. We were hoping to attempt Changtse—the north peak of Everest, 24,730 feet. This was rather a wildly optimistic plan and we realized now that we had hardly the equipment or forces to do it. But it was worth a try.

We set up camp in a little snow hollow at nearly 21,000 feet and crawled inside, out of the wind and cold. During the night it snowed steadily and next morning our decision had been made for us. It was quite fine but obviously more bad weather was brewing. We had no hope of reaching the Changtse summit. We decided to throw it in.

Writhing Billows

We started our return in steadily falling snow and in the early afternoon camped well up the West Rongbuk glacier. At 5.30 next morning I crawled out of the tent. I looked round casually and my face fell. "Hey, George! Come out and have a look. I don't like it!" I shouted.

George scrambled out to join me and looked silently at the heavens. Over Nepal the sky was as black as night. Great ugly billows were surging up and writhing about the summits. It was the most ominous weather sign I had ever seen.

"Let's get out of here! Looks like the end of the world," I said.

We didn't waste any time. We stirred the Sherpas out of the tent, packed, and started up the glacier almost at a jogtrot. We couldn't afford to be trapped on this side of the Nup La. It was about six miles to our camp on the far side of the pass—six miles of soft snow at over 18,000 feet—but our fear spurred us on.

The visibility was shocking and we couldn't see where to put our feet. George's snowglasses fogged up, so I took over the lead. It was nerve-racking work as I felt my way from crevasse to crevasse.

We headed off across the treacherous plateau. George had me on a tight rope and I plodded my way across as fast as I could go. The snow was falling heavily and had blotted out all

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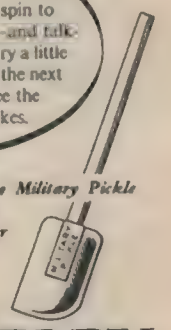

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our old steps and concealed many of the crevasses.

But it was no place for a faint heart. The only thing to do was to push ahead. When I sank into a crevasse, George pulled me out and we tried somewhere else. The whole plateau had changed in our absence. In desperation I slithered across a frail snowbridge — and it held! Next moment I was beside the first big gap. The others joined me. George was a tower of strength. With his strong hand on the rope I knew that I couldn't fall far.

The route through the great crevasses had disappeared, so we set to work to remake it. We lowered the Sherpas over the edge and followed them down. In the depths of the crevasse it was strangely quiet although, above, the storm was reaching a new fury.

Fumbling Downwards

There was at least six inches of fresh snow on the icefall and it was increasing every moment. Already on our right we could hear the dull boom as fresh snow avalanches swept down off the bluffs on to the glacier. But we couldn't see anything! Straining my eyes to recognize the way, I fumbled downwards. Often I would come to an impossible drop or a gaping crevasse and know I was on the wrong route. And then I would climb wearily back and try again. But we found a way down.

We reached the bottom of the icefall in an exhausted condition. To see the easy, side moraine again brought tears of relief to our strained eyes. We struggled down a little way to a flat place and decided to camp.

The Sherpas wouldn't let us help. Respectfully but firmly they sat us down while they pitched the tent. They laid out our sleeping bags and put us in them. And before long they were thrusting hot mugs of delicious tea into our hands. We all sat round, sipping and laughing like the bunch of old friends and comrades that we were.

For two days we rested beside a little lake near the Ngojumba glacier. It was calm and peaceful here, but we couldn't keep the old question out of our minds: what had the Swiss done? It was now June 5 and they should be coming off the mountain with their story of success or failure. We decided to find out for ourselves.

Between us and the Swiss base camp on Khumbu glacier was a high pass. This had been crossed from east to west in 1951, and we planned to use it. On June 6 we moved off from our rest camp. There were six of us altogether—George and I, Angputa and Tashi Phuta and two tough old specimens we had recruited down the valley. Pemba and Angpemba. Angje had gone directly down to Namche Bazar with all our excess gear.

Hairs Of The Yeti

We reached the foot of the pass and started climbing up steep, loose rocks, when Pemba stopped and picked something off the ground. Obviously greatly excited, he showed it to Angpemba. Curious, I asked them what it was all about. They placed in my hand a tuft of long black hairs: thick and coarse, they looked more like bristles than anything else. *"Yeti, Sahib! Yeti!"* they cried.

I couldn't help being impressed by their conviction, and it did seem a strange place to find some hair. We were well over 19,000 feet so the Abominable Snowman was obviously no mean rock climber.

I called to George and showed it to him. We discussed it with enthusiasm. It would be quite an achievement to bring back the hair of the Abominable Snowman for scientific examination. But, scenting our intentions, Pemba leaned forward and his gnarled old hand snatched the tuft away and threw it far over the bluff. *"Bohut kharab, Sahib! Bohut kharab!"*

We crossed the pass and descended rapidly towards the Khumbu glacier. Everest was dominating our view now and the sight of it stimulated our desire for information. We reached the Swiss base camp and were astonished to find it deserted. Dropping our packs, we went on up the glacier. It too was deserted and so was the icefall. The Swiss had gone!

We camped that night at the lake camp and I didn't sleep very much. Somehow the answer to our question seemed so important and I was determined to find out tomorrow. At 2 p.m. next day we arrived at the village of Pangboche and were welcomed into one of the fine homes there. A huge plate of boiled potatoes was placed in front of us and we attacked it with vigour.

Outside we heard a clattering of boots and next moment Shipton burst into the room. We jumped to our feet and rushed towards him. "What about the Swiss?" I cried.

"Lambert and Tenzing reached twenty-eight thousand feet," he replied. "They didn't get to the top!" Relief and admiration chased through my mind. Everest was still unclimbed. . . .

We sat Shipton down in front of another plate of potatoes and we all talked furiously. Shipton wanted us to come with him over into the Barun valley and then out to the Indian border by an unexplored route. George and I looked at each other. It was too good a trip to miss. But first of all, we had to do something about all our gear at Namche. I decided to continue down there the same afternoon to sort it out and then return the next day.

Too Tired To Go On

I arrived at Namche Bazar in the evening and later visited the neatly laid-out lines of the Swiss camp. The party had a fascinating story to tell, but they were obviously a weary and dispirited body of men.

The guide, Lambert, and the Sherpa leader Tenzing had struggled upwards and established a lonely camp at 27,200 feet on the south-east ridge.

In the morning they dragged themselves slowly up the ridge. At a height of about 28,000 feet they were too exhausted to go any farther and only just struggled back to their camp and safety.

I went back to my tent with my mind swimming with the courage and daring of these men, who had unquestionably thrown everything into the fray. Next day I returned up to Pangboche and rejoined Shipton and Lowe. We set off and on June 11 we camped in the south branch of the Imja glacier underneath the pass leading to the Hongu valley.

In the following days we revelled in the type of life of which Shipton is such an outstanding exponent. We crossed from the Imja to the Hongu valley and in two glorious days we climbed three fine peaks and then plunged down to the Barun glacier itself. The monsoon struck in earnest when we were camped at the head of

THE MAN WHO CAUGHT MALARIA

IN an English hospital, five hundred mosquitoes gave Charles Howard a severe attack of malaria. As a human guinea pig, he helped to solve the secret of the mysterious quaking fever that has plagued man for centuries. Don't miss the dramatic article

by Don Everitt

IN JOHN BULL NEXT WEEK

It's The Custom . . . in **BOURNE**

Boys run to clinch the deal

The auction runners may cover half a mile. Their reward: one shilling

THE schoolboys who run up and down during the White Bread Meadow Letting at Bourne, a small country town in Lincolnshire, often cover up to half a mile. "That is quite a distance for an untrained ten-year-old," says Tom Bannister, junior, a thirty-six year old farmer who first ran for the Letting when he was eight.

The White Bread Meadow is an acre and a quarter of grazing which is let annually at a public auction held early in April. During the bidding, two schoolboys keep running between Queen's Bridge, a tiny stone bridge over a stream, and a street lamp seventy-five yards away. They start running when a bid is made, and not until they have made a bid-free run to the lamp-post and back is an offer accepted.

The boys are picked from the crowd of onlookers at the auction and are paid a shilling each for their efforts. "I had to run the course six times at one Letting," says Tom Bannister, junior. "It just about exhausted me."

The auction, which is held on the Queen's Bridge at seven in the evening, is conducted nowadays by Raymond Herd, a local auctioneer. The rent from the Letting is used to buy some hundreds of loaves of bread, and these are distributed free to householders in the Eastgate ward of the town. Last year, 360 one-pound cob loaves were given.

The Letting dates from 1748. It is carried out under the will of Matthew Clay, who left two fields and directed that they were to be let and the proceeds spent in the manner still observed today. White Bread Meadow has been let in the place of Matthew Clay's original two fields ever since 1770.

There are two trustees, or stewards, of the bequest, and they are elected annually. The present stewards are Tom Bannister, who has held the office since 1935, and his son Tom Bannister, junior. Tom, senior, now seventy-one, often ran for the Letting as a boy, and has bid for it successfully. In 1937, when it seemed likely that no one would take White Bread Meadow, Tom, senior, got the tenancy for £2 7s. 6d.

"The record bid was made in 1949," says Raymond Herd, the auctioneer. "Eddie Bricknell paid £20—to finish off the auction before we were all drenched by the heavy rain."

After the auction, the stewards —and anyone else who cares to come along—have a feast of bread, cheese and onions at the Meadow's expense. The feast is held in turn at the Marquis of Granby, the Anchor and the New Inn. It is, in effect, the annual business meeting.

Bourne people value the White Bread Meadow Letting, and the boys of the town are usually eager to be selected to run. A girl took part in 1944. But never before—or since.

the Barun, and we knew our climbing for the season was finished.

On June 19 we descended into the lower Barun valley, where we split up our party. Shipton, Lowe and I decided to return to the railhead at Jogbani.

Shipton was filled with a fiery sense of urgency. He felt that it was his duty to return to England as soon as possible to help to organize the 1953 British attack on Everest. He drove us on with long, hard marches. We crossed a 14,000-foot pass out of the Barun and for two days plunged dizzily downwards into the heat and leeches of the Arun river. We plugged onwards, and on June 23 we crossed the Arun river by a long, slender bridge of bamboo and reached the main path back to India.

By this time George Lowe and I were thoroughly tired of walking. Even the lovely scenery beside the Arun river failed to cheer us up. All we wanted was a long, long rest.

On June 26, we descended to the great tributary river, the Sabhaya. Just for the fun of it I inflated my air mattress and paddled my way slowly across. This was the way to travel, cool and effortless, letting the stream do all the work. Why didn't we try it on the Arun? Certainly there had been too many rapids higher up, but as far as I could remember, from now on, it swept along smooth and untroubled. I suggested this to George and he agreed enthusiastically. We decided to have a practice run before we camped.

We inflated both of our air mattresses and tied poles across the front and back with a nylon rope. There was a gap of nearly two feet between the air mattresses. We picked a couple of branches for paddles and then launched ourselves.

It was marvellous! We each sat astride one of the airbeds and although they buckled a little and we were up to our waists in water, the whole raft was remarkably steady and we sped down the swift flowing Arun in great style. We were gaining rapidly on Shipton and the Sherpas, and when they picked a camping spot for the night we swept up to the bank with a flourish and dragged our craft ashore. Our minds were made up. Tomorrow we wouldn't walk a step—we would raft all the way down on the Arun.

We woke up at 4 a.m., and by 4.30 Shipton had left with all the porters. George and I set to work in the dark to reassemble our raft. We made a very careful job of it. We used good, stout poles and plenty of nylon rope. We blew the mattresses up full and hard, and made some proper paddles. In the grey of early morning we were ready to go.

The great, swift-flowing river looked

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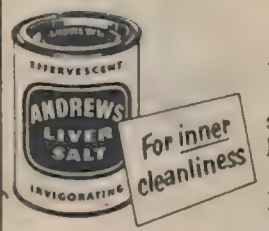

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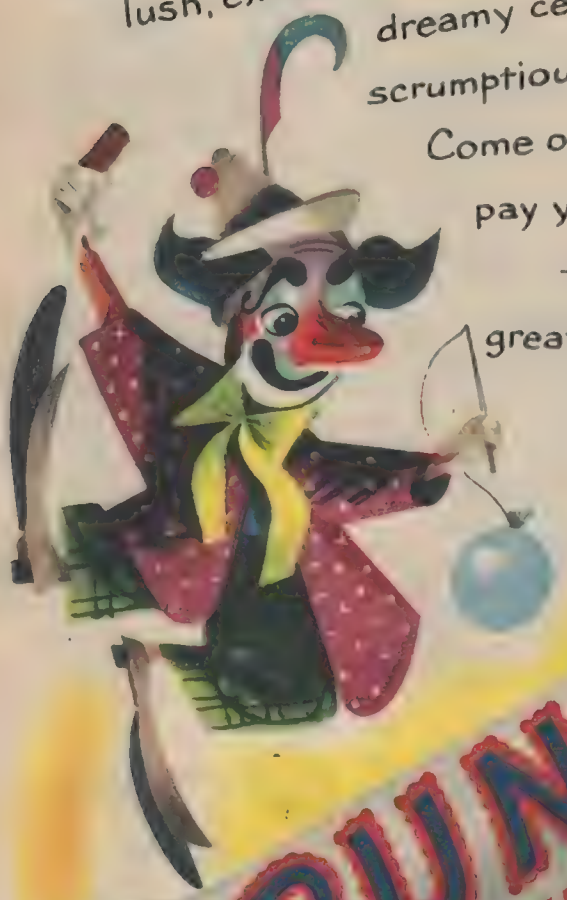

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"I only bother about the white squares . . ."

decidedly dangerous in the dim light.

We pushed off into the swift current. At first we kept close to the shore, but as our confidence grew we paddled out a little and our speed increased. Everything started to seem sensible again. Here we were, shooting along much faster than you could walk, and with literally no effort at all. "This is the life, George!" I said.

"Too right! We should have thought of it before."

In half an hour we must have covered over two miles of the river—equivalent to at least three on the twisting track on the cliffs above. It was marvellous. And then. . . . "Can you hear anything, George?" I said.

We listened. A dull, powerful roar came drifting up the valley.

"Let's get to the side!"

We paddled frantically, but our ungainly craft was in the grip of the increasing current and we made little headway. Below us, now, we could see a great series of bluffs thrusting out into the stream. And high up on the bluffs was the figure of Eric Shipton waving furiously. We redoubled our efforts with the paddles, but with a feeling of panic we realized that we were helpless.

We could now see what we were coming to. The whole great river was smashing headlong against an enormous bluff. Most of the water was swept violently into a little smooth-walled bay and formed an enormous whirlpool from which it flushed periodically into the foaming channel below. It was an ugly sight.

The roar of the river was now deafening. "Hold on to the raft whatever happens, George!" I said. "It's our only chance!" And then we were hurled, on the crest of a wave, at the smooth rock wall.

In a vain effort to cushion the blow we thrust our legs out in front. But as the wave crashed on the rocks our buoyant little craft slid sideways off it and round into the racing waters of the whirlpool. The whirlpool must have been a good 150 feet across, with a nasty gaping hole at its centre. We paddled madly to try to reach the bluffs, but the current was far too strong. Round we went, out into the main stream of the river, hurled against the bluff and then back into the whirlpool again.

Sucked Into Evil Eye

Travelling round with us were masses of small branches and great logs. One log, a foot in diameter and fifteen feet long, was dragged into the centre and sucked down almost out of sight into that evil eye. When it was released, it shot into the air like a cork out of a champagne bottle.

Round we went. It was obvious that there was little we could do, and as long as our amazing craft stayed together we would come to no harm. One swirl threw us right into the gaping centre so that the racing water on the rim of the whirlpool towered over our heads. Our dangling legs were sucked greedily down, but the great buoyancy of our little craft saved us and we were expelled to the outer edge again.

After four round trips we were becoming almost hardened to it, but we still hadn't thought of any way of getting out of the whirlpool.

"Let's have a bit of your chocolate, George," I said.

"We'd better be careful with it. I've worked out that we should last about two days on it."

"I'm all for a dull life, myself. Let's try another paddle."

But round we went again, out into the stream, smashing against the bluff, and back into the writhing, plucking depths of the whirlpool. I blessed the care we had taken with the raft an hour before. Only an hour? It seemed like a lifetime!

New Force In River

Shipton was climbing down the steep cliffs, held on a rope by the Sherpas. As we started for the sixth round, I saw him step down on to the last little ledge above the water. And then I lost sight of him. I was too absorbed in the gyrations of our craft.

There seemed to be a new force in the river this time, and we hurtled at the bluff on an enormous wave. We rode up it for ten feet into the air as it struck the rock, and then slid off again and were thrown to the outermost edges of the whirlpool. Desperately I reached out and caught the rocks at the side. The raft almost split in two. I had a scissors grip on my air-mattress with my legs and I was stretched out straight as I fought with the current to hold our craft in place.

I was about to let go when the tug lessened, the other end of the raft was washed in, and George got his hands on to the rocks. We couldn't get out here, for above us was sixty feet of vertical, holdless rock. We must try to drag ourselves along the twenty feet to the ledge where Shipton was standing.

With straining muscles we battled with the current, making an inch at a time. Fortunately we found enough holds on the water-polished rock, but at times we were almost plucked off. Shipton's voice rose above the roar of the waters and something struck me in the face. It was a rope. I took a solid grip on it and Shipton towed us along with powerful tugs. We were dragged up to the ledge and crawled thankfully out.

Shipton Would Lead

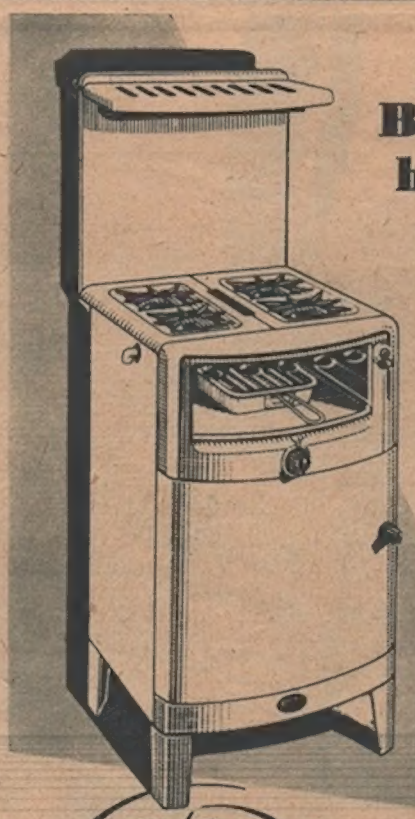
Four days later we were back in India. Among the first news we received was that the Swiss planned to throw another powerful attempt on to Everest in the autumn. New oxygen equipment had been developed, and a party composed mainly of famous Swiss guides had been chosen.

Shipton flew off to England, and George and I started the long sea trip back to New Zealand. I arrived home in Auckland to find a letter waiting for me from Shipton. He had agreed, somewhat reluctantly, to lead the 1953 British attempt on Everest. He wanted George Lowe, Harry Ayres and myself to join his party.

Nothing could have stimulated more my interest in the Swiss autumn attempt. Every day I scanned the newspapers for their meagre scraps of information. One report said, inaccurately, that the Swiss had camped 120 feet from the top. But finally the facts emerged—they had failed again.

The Swiss parties had been strong ones, well equipped and well organized—and yet they had failed. It is not necessary to find excuses for not climbing Everest—the mountain will supply these in abundance. But if we were to have any chance of success, our expedition would need a high degree of well-acclimatized technical skill; it would need the best in modern equipment and oxygen; and it would need first-class organization. But more than anything else it would need its share of good luck.

NEXT WEEK: I team up with Tenzing for the attack



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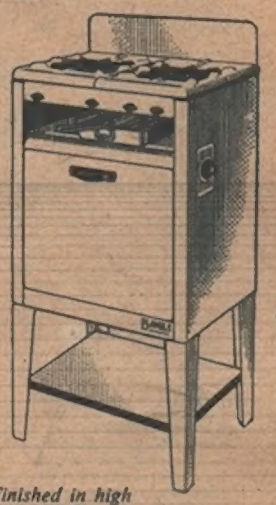

The IMP

This compact and efficient cooker is just the right size for a family up to four. Features include a drop oven door and two fast boiling burners. Finished in high quality cream vitreous enamel. Like the '68' this cooker is available on attractive h.p. terms—see it at your local showrooms.

* Both these cookers are available for Calor Gas.

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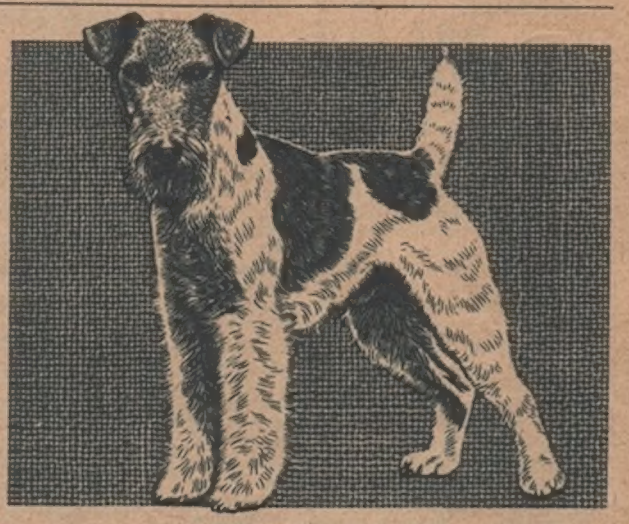

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OH, JOHNNY! *by TIM*

STANLEY MASON PILOTS THE HOLIDAY CARS

Continued from page 25

the last to leave a hotel and the first to arrive at the next night's stopping place. The job often calls for fast and skilful driving. During the summer of 1952, he was considerably behind schedule on a run through Italy and decided to take a short cut. Turning down a side road leading to a river crossing, he suddenly found himself in the middle of a full-scale Italian Army manoeuvre.

The road bridge was blocked, but tanks and lorries were waiting to cross a newly-built pontoon bridge close by. Unable to turn back through a long queue of military vehicles, Mason trod on the accelerator and shot across the temporary bridge, only a few yards ahead of a large tank, while on both banks Italian brass hats raved at the intrusion.

The Speed Maniac

Mason and his staff have discovered that however fast they travel between hotels there is nearly always one driver who arrives ahead of them.

"Each rally has its speed maniac who leaves one hotel early in the morning and drives at breakneck pace to the next, usually arriving before lunch," says Mason. "He sees nothing of the countryside, but has the doubtful satisfaction of always being first."

Since the war, the popularity of holiday rallies—most of them sponsored by the leading motor firms—has increased steadily and Mason now has a staff of six "couriers" assisting him in the running of twenty fifteen-day rallies every summer season.

Although the club's tours are described as rallies, there is no competitive element. Parties are given a detailed itinerary but travel at their own speed and make any detours they wish, only linking up each night at the same stopping place.

For many of the rally drivers, language difficulties present a constant set of problems on Continental roads. On a tour through Germany, Mason was waved to a halt by one driver who complained that his map was inaccurate—he had just passed a road sign indicating the town of Umleitung, and it was not marked on his chart. Patiently, Mason explained that "Umleitung" is the German for "diversion."

Although a skilled and experienced driver, Mason, now forty-seven, was never taught to drive. He used to manoeuvre London taxi cabs into their parking spaces in a garage opposite his home and had his first experience of road driving at fifteen, when, after his father had sprained his ankle, he brought the family back to London from the Cheddar Gorge. "It was the first time any of them knew I could drive."

In 1934, through his interest in cars, he was made honorary secretary of a motor touring club and got his first experience of Continental driving as a co-driver on the Monte Carlo rally. He remembers the trip as one of his worst experiences.

"The car's owner was inexperienced, and shortly after the start he took a ninety-degree bridge turn at far too high a speed. I had a fleeting glimpse of a series of legs rising in the air as their owners disappeared over the parapet, but we were going too fast to stop and see the result. Half a mile farther on, the driver handed over, trembling like a leaf, and I drove for the rest of the trip."

Mason is probably the only man to win a Concours d'Elégance in a car with a wing ripped off. In 1935, racing his Talbot across France to Monte Carlo, he collided with a lorry and lost his nearside rear wing. For the concours in Monte Carlo, he parked so close to a wall that the the judges did not walk right round the car. The defect was not noticed until he drove up to receive his cup the next day.

Mason's enthusiasm for Continental driving led him to plan trips for friends and, in 1946, he formed the Travel Club to provide a professional service. The idea caught on rapidly and his Piccadilly office now deals with several thousand applications and inquiries each year.

Last summer, Mason did ten two-week trips without a break and had to go into hospital for a rest at the end of the season.

"Continental motoring is a pastime that gets into your blood," he says. "The straight, fast roads, the scenery, the good food and the opportunities for driving adventure make it irresistable. Families who started doubtfully now come back each year."

Snow Blocked Pass

Many drivers who set out confidently on a trans-Continental trip with the Motorists' Travel Club have little more than weekend motoring experience on quiet country roads. Once, however, the holiday rallyists earned the admiration of toughened, long-distance drivers. Three years ago, on reaching a hotel in St. Moritz, Mason was phoned by the drivers of several powerful cars who told him that an unexpected snowfall had blocked a pass through the Alps and that they were unable to get through.

"A short while later, two elderly women and the middle-aged man who was driving them in the rally walked into the lounge, and I asked them if they had had any trouble getting across," says Mason. "One of the women replied: 'Yes, it *was* rather difficult. But then, we wanted to reach St. Moritz for tea.'" THE END

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"HEAVENLY sunshine . . . magic scenery"—in those words Mr. R. Murray (8 Grace Avenue, Belfast) summed up his Honeymoon Tour of Europe, won with a First Prize cheque.

Chief Winners No. 1,976

FIRST PRIZE, £250 plus £1 Weekly Pension (as offered) or £750 Lump Sum: C. G. Pearce, Flat 15, Bourne Apartments, Bath Road, Bournemouth:

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For ten winners of £2 10s., see *"Bullets" Bulletin*. 25 Prizes of £1 and 1,500 "Good Shot" Prizes have also been posted.

RULES 1. First Prize for best *Bullet* received. Others in order of merit; the test is of cleverness, aptness and originality.

2. Editor undertakes that all *Bullets* received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent Adjudicators.

3. As entry-fee enclose P.O. as indicated. Fee submitted will be taken to cover *Bullets* in coupon order—any sent in excess will be disqualified. Plain-paper entries are allowed. Make P.O. payable to JOHN BULL, cross /& Co./, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated. Forces half-rate for *Bullets* for entry-fees not exceeding 2s. if coupons personally completed and Service rank indicated.

4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that result of this Contest (in *"Bullets" Bulletin* dated April 23 and in JOHN BULL dated April 30), also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding. Odhams' employees (and families) ineligible.

(See "Daily Herald" on Saturday, April 16, for early news of No. 1,981 result.)

POST BY MON., APRIL 4

"Bullets" 1,981, "John Bull," Long Acre, London, W.C.2 (Comp.).

RHEUMATISM ATTACKS YOUNG AS WELL AS OLD

MOTHER (30) AND RETIRED RAILWAY INSPECTOR (84) BOTH FOUND

Rheumatic misery relieved by FYNNON

Mrs. M. C., 30, housewife of Kilkeel, County Down (who wishes to remain anonymous), finds her six active children keep her pretty busy. She writes: '. . . I was suffering . . . with rheumatism. I got all kinds of rubs and liniments all to no avail. A friend told me about Fynnon Salt . . . I had a few tins . . . began to feel relief . . . now my rheumatism has completely vanished. I still take . . . Fynnon Salt first thing in the morning and I feel wonderful the whole day.' (*Photograph posed by a model.*) *The originals of these letters can be seen at our offices.*

Mr. H. S. Jordan, 84 year old retired railway inspector, seen here working in the garden of his attractive bungalow at Rochester, found Fynnon Salt cleared all traces of his rheumatism. 'A year ago I could not walk half a mile through rheumatism in my feet and legs,' he wrote. '. . . if I walked 500 yards I was in agony and had to get someone to take my boots off . . . I started taking your salts and by the time I had taken half a tin I began to get some improvement . . . now I think nothing of walking some three miles . . .' (*Actual photograph of Mr. Jordan*).

How Fynnon can help

If you are suffering from this painful, stubborn and often disabling complaint, these letters will be encouraging news. For these experiences of a busy young housewife and an active older man are by no means isolated cases—both letters are typical of hundreds we have received from sufferers of all ages, expressing gratitude for the way Fynnon Salt has relieved their rheumatic pain. This is not surprising when you consider that Fynnon provides a treatment which is in complete accordance with modern scientific findings on rheumatism.

Early treatment advised

It has been found that danger years for fibrositis, neuritis, lumbago and the less acute forms of rheumatism are between the ages of 25 and 45. But while the number of these cases appears to decline among elderly people, a proportion develop in later years into the more persistent kind of rheumatism.

As research has increased our knowledge of the incidence of rheumatism, it has also produced general agreement among medical men that improper elimination of waste from the body frequently accompanies and contributes to rheumatic conditions. Fynnon Salt acts as a two-way attack on impurities.

1. Fynnon Salt is an effective but gentle aperient working on the scientific principles of osmosis. This natural process utilises body fluid drawn into the intestinal canal to rid the system of waste matter.

2. It acts as a diuretic, flushing and clearing the kidneys and reducing the concentration of impurities in the blood—the approved treatment for certain rheumatic conditions.

Act on first twinges—for Fynnon's unique combination of mineral salts can help you most if taken early, before the first twinges become a regular discomfort.

A double treatment for rheumatism

Because there may be a number of causes of rheumatism, no possible line of attack should be ignored. Many enthusiastic users of Fynnon Salt are gaining especial benefit from the additional use of Fynnon Balm which is an entirely different, yet complementary, treatment for rheumatism, bringing deep relief to underlying tissues and muscles by soothing away rheumatic pain. Either treatment can prove effective on its own, but many sufferers will obtain the greatest benefit from the two treatments used in combination.

FYNNON SALT

LARGE TIN 2/4½d

For the relief of **RHEUMATISM**

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39 New B

It's the appetising taste of Guinness that goes so well with food

A TENDER juicy steak; mountains of crisp golden chips; and a glass of Guinness in the cream of condition. There's a meal and a half for a hungry man!

You can probably remember when you liked sweet drinks with savoury food. But your tastes have grown up since then. The famous hotels and restaurants agree with you — you can always get Guinness there. The appetising taste of Guinness is just right with good food. And its taste is appetising because it's brewed naturally.

The barley too is done to a turn

You don't go messing up your steak with this and that, do you? You let its natural goodness come out. Same with Guinness. Its goodness is simply the natural goodness of barley, hops and yeast. Nothing else is added. Nothing else is needed. Guinness is natural through and through.

For example, the colour. Guinness gets its lovely colour, as well as part of its lovely taste, *purely* from roasted barley. And the man in charge of the roasting actually takes slices of individual grains to make sure that they are done to a turn. That's the sort of care they take over your Guinness. And that's the sort of process, natural but controlled, that makes Guinness taste right with food.

G.E.2484.B